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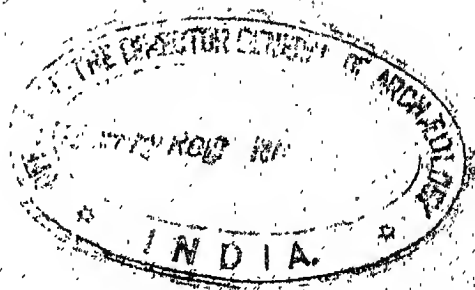
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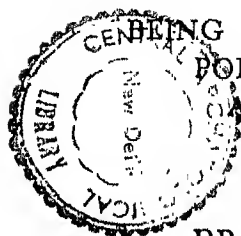
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INDO-ARYAN POLITY



BEING A STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC AND
POLITICAL CONDITION OF INDIA
AS DEPICTED IN THE RIG VEDA

BY

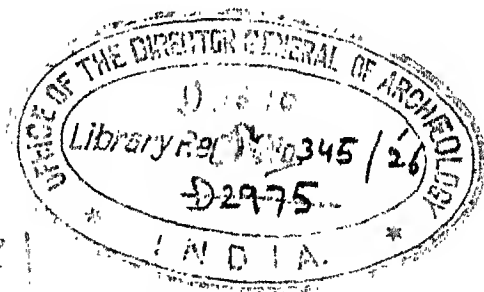
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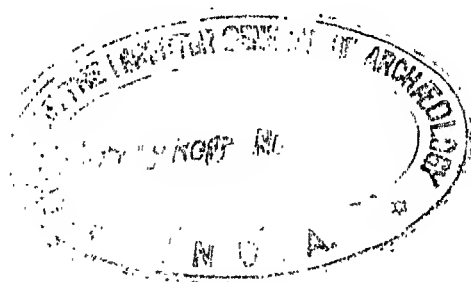
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HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJADHIRAJ RAJ RAJESHWARA
SAWAI SHREE TUKOJI RAO HOLKAR BAHADUR,
G.C.I.E., OF INDORE,
AS AN HUMBLE TOKEN OF
LOYALTY AND DEVOTION.

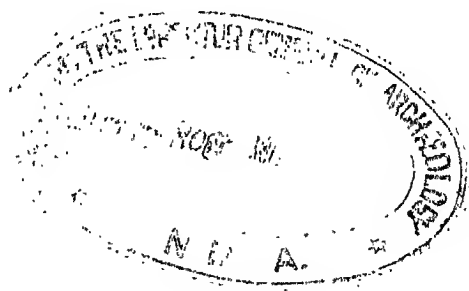




PREFACE

THE present volume is an enlargement of my book, *Indo-Aryan Polity*, published in 1919. As will be seen from Introduction, a good portion of my original plan of writing an account of the economic and political condition of ancient India has now been realized.

I should here remember with gratefulness the memory of the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee of Calcutta, under whose encouragement I began the work about eight years ago. Circumstances prevented me from carrying on the work as speedily as I desired.



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INTRODUCTION

My object is to attempt to construct the economic history of India. First, I propose to deal only with the Vedic period, as that in itself covers a long history of the Indo-Aryans. The Vedic hymns were composed during several hundred years. They not only reflect the social life of the early Aryans in India, the environment and the consequent adjustment to it, but at the same time contain many of the leading ideas that were moulding the society of the time. They also retain some of the institutions which were becoming obsolete. All these aspects may be studied with profit from the texts of the Vedas. The development of a race can very well be studied from its ideas as found in its literature. Social progress is due to the interaction of man and his environment. By this conflict and the necessary attempt at harmony ideas grow, the mind is led to think. The primitive mind would hardly begin to think about anything unless some event, that is, change, compelled it to do so. The objective world is predominant as the cause of all ideas. Thus environmental change is the main stimulus to the progress of primitive man. The fact is very clearly seen in the changes in religious beliefs of the different branches of the Aryan stock. The Indo-Aryans and the Græco-Romans started with the same ideas about religion. Religion, as Caird says, is the continuous attempt of the mind, the self, the ego, to rehabilitate itself with its environment. The primitive mind seeks to propitiate every force in the universe which is superior to the individual. Thus according to Pfleiderer the first religion was based on fear. This fear of the forces in the universe may be said to be due to superior environmental forces. These again may be divided into two, viz., the social forces

and the physical forces. The primitive Aryan saw in the head of the family a force which was superior to any that an individual might attain to. The undisputed and ready obedience that the *pater* commanded must have had its origin in his superior physical force. Even after the organization of society had advanced it secured for the *pater* as such the supreme power over life and death. So, when the mind began to think, howsoever crudely, it saw in the *pater* the embodiment of the highest social authority. He was the wielder of supreme power in life, and how could it be thought that he was powerless after death? Though invisible and buried under the ground he was supposed to wield the same power. The separation of the man from his power was too advanced a conception for the primitive mind to realize. The successor of the original *pater* was merely carrying on the same *imperium* with the help of his dead predecessors. Thus one of the first conceptions about religion was the worship of the dead ancestor who was supposed to exercise the same powers of protection against alien aggression.

At the same time the primitive man saw in the physical environment certain forces which were beyond his control and which could handle him in any way they liked. He saw in his daily life that there was no event or change without a personality as the cause of it. So, he attributed individual personality to each of the various forces of physical nature. Thus originated worship of the gods of physical nature as isolated individual beings who exercise a power and therefore require propitiation.

The elements of these two forms of worship grew up in the Aryan mind before the migrations began. In Greece and Rome physical nature, being beautiful, did not rouse the sense of fear, and hence of worship. There the other element of ancestor worship was carried to its logical extreme and moulded all the institutions of the Greeks and the Romans.¹ In India, on the other hand, nature, being sublime, inspired awe. Thus Indra, Agni, the Maruts,

¹ Coulanges: *The Ancient City*. Warde Fowler: *Religious Experience of the Ancient Romans*.

etc., gained a predominance in the Vedas. The Aryan intellect, being essentially speculative, developed the other side later on, e.g., Jupiter, Zeus, etc., in the West, and all the detailed working out of the religion of Vedic *pitris* during the later Pauranic period in India.

Religion is the most important element in a primitive society, especially among the early Aryans. Therefore, it has been possible to study its development more fully than any other aspect of their life. But early man is very material too, and his religion is always expressed in terms essentially pertaining to his material interests. Thus the religious hymns of the Vedas can profitably be studied from the economic point of view as well. And it is our purpose to study the earliest literature of the Indo-Aryans with a view to the building up of their economic and political structure so far as that is possible from the materials that have come down to us.

The pertinent question is raised here as to what should come under economic history. We may at once point out that its aim is to trace the working out of ideas so far as these were reflected in acts. That is, we should not only study economic facts but also economic concepts. Facts of economic life, again, may be influenced by non-economic forces in society; and these come within our purview so far as they affect economic activities. Thus the organization of the family leading to the village community would have to be studied. The social relationships would reveal the extent of social association; and we have to reckon with the latter in determining the economic unit. Social morality would have to be studied so far as it gave direction to ideas affecting the economic evolution of the race. On the continent of Europe slavery, usury, as economic concepts, were directly influenced by moral ideas about them. In India the position of the *vanij* or merchant in society must have led to the discouragement of trade as a profession. Political organization is responsible for economic activity to such a great extent that its study is an essential preliminary to a proper understanding of economic growth. Religion no less affects the economic

ideas than polity. Wars of defence and aggression lead to the development in the art of production of war materials. The chariot, the bow and arrow, the coat of mail, etc., all testify to this. The improvement of submarines, aeroplanes, and machine guns during the recent war proves the validity of our proposition even in modern days.

We can say, therefore, with Cunningham, that the economic history of a nation must be a study of all the facts of its past life, but only from a special point of view, viz., the economic.

We have, therefore, divided our subject into various subdivisions, each of which must be studied for the proper understanding of the economic life of the Vedic Aryans.

The subdivisions are as follows :—

- I. Family.
- II. Morality.
- III. Castes and classes.
- IV. Village community affecting the family.
- V. Polity—under which would come—
 - (1) The division into political groups.
 - (2) Political institutions.
 - (3) Judicial organization.
- VI. Agriculture :
 - (1) Monsoon.
 - (2) Methods and implements of agriculture.
 - (3) Irrigation and manure.
 - (4) Agricultural products.
 - (5) Cattle.
- VII. Arts and Crafts :
 - (1) Use of metals and the art of smelting.
 - (2) Implements used in the Soma sacrifice.
 - (3) Domestic utensils.
 - (4) House and its building.
 - (5) Wells.
 - (6) Use of leather.
 - (7) Clothing and weaving.
 - (8) Navigation and shipbuilding.
 - (9) Hunting—the bow and arrow.

- VIII. Units of measurement.
- IX. Trade and commerce.
- X. Economic concepts :
 - (1) Wealth.
 - (2) Property.
- XI. War and the implements of war.
- XII. Professions and callings.
- XIII. Culture—material civilization :
 - (1) Food and its preparation.
 - (2) Knowledge and arts.
 - (3) Custom and fashion.
 - (4) Urban and rural life.
- XIV. Conclusion.

Family does not directly come within the scope of our study; but as it indirectly affects the material welfare and gives direction to the system of economy, it must be studied only so far as that is necessary. The Vedic family has already been studied by almost all the Western scholars of Vedic literature. We have, therefore, made no complete sketch of it, for in a work like this the conclusions of others should not be included merely for the purpose of completing the story. Our study has been confined to a few institutions of family life, which help in tracing the changes in the economic life during the period of the later *Saṃhitas*. The section on Family is, therefore, incomplete and the topics dealt with disjointed.

War and the implements of war have been delegated to a separate treatment because of their great importance in the economic life of a race that is settling down in an alien land hedged in on all sides by powerful foreign people. In the early Vedic literature these form a subject which is big enough to be treated separately.

In this book all the above topics have been treated except (1) War and the implements of war, (2) Professions and callings, and (3) Culture. These are left out for treatment in a separate volume.

The division of the period followed here is entirely different from that of all authorities on Vedic literature.

The usual practice is to treat the whole of the Vedic period, including that of the Commentaries, as if it was one dominated by any single idea. In fact, the period is vast enough to be divided into smaller ones for the purpose of studying each with reference to the peculiar ideas and activities of each. In the Atharva Veda there is the distinct stamp of newer ideas and newer activities for which we vainly seek in the Rig Veda. The Brahmanas or the Commentaries always profess to be the proper interpretations and the logical development of ideas found in the Samhitas. But they invariably read the current ideas into the more ancient texts. From our point of view it is absolutely necessary to separate each period from the others. It is only by such division that we can trace the development of ideas and activities in the sphere of economic life.

We have, therefore, limited our inquiry to the strictly Vedic period, that is, the period during which the four Vedas were composed. This period again has been subdivided into three, viz., the period of the Rig Veda, the period of the Saman and Yajur Vedas and the contemporary Brahmanas, and finally the period of the Atharva Veda. Of course, there is not much difference between the period of the Rig Veda and that of the Saman and Yajur Vedas. Some of the texts of the latter are bodily taken into the Saman Veda. But others are at the same time excluded. From this discrimination we shall discover the change of opinion in the meantime. This will give us a workable clue to the unfolding of the later economic life. The period of Atharva Veda as a separate one needs no justification, as it undoubtedly is a period of change and development.

In dealing with the period of the Rig Veda as a separate and distinct stage, another difficulty arises. Here we can study economic facts and economic concepts, as also the social and political institutions of the time. But the difficulty is with regard to the co-ordination of facts and ideas to institutions and social life. This must be done by means of some workable theory. But a theory is always

justified by its capacity to explain the past facts and relate them to the future development. By confining ourselves, in this book, to the period of the Rig Veda only, we are apt to be misconstrued as to the reasonableness of our theories. We cannot go beyond the Rig Veda and therefore cannot justify our theories by showing their natural development in the actual working system of the later age. In such circumstances we have been compelled to withhold our exposition of the theory underlying the connection of ideas and activities and institutions till we come to the next period. In such a work, which must necessarily be divided into parts, we cannot hold out any theory based on the past facts only without correlating it with subsequent growth. This would lay us open to the charge of dogmatism and hasty generalization. That is the reason why we have not connected the special institutions of family life with any of the economic activities of the period, nor have we brought in political institutions as an influencing factor on the development of arts and crafts, and trade and commerce. We have, therefore, left these topics for the second period of our division, where we shall first of all correlate all these ideas, activities, and institutions of the Rig Veda period, and build up our theory which we shall have opportunity to uphold in the subsequent growth of the same elements during the next period. This will give to the whole structure a logical firmness which it is worth while to pursue even if at the apparent sacrifice of coherence in dealing with the first period.

We have also attempted to compare, so far as is practicable, the development of the same ideas and institutions in the other branches of the Aryan family. The best method of study is the Historico-Comparative method, that is, to study the historical stages of the past of any one nation and to compare each stage with the similar stage in the history of other nations. Therefore, in tracing the development of the economic life of the Indo-Aryans, we have freely compared with the development of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons, particularly the latter, because economic activity was more fully

and more freely developed among the early Teutons.

We may say here that we have excluded from our study those passages which are subjects of great dispute as to their real interpretation. Their inclusion would have made our results less certain and more open to doubts. For example, the word *pani* occurs in the Rig Veda in several passages. It has been variously interpreted as the aborigines, the demons, and the merchants. In such circumstances we have thought it proper, for the certainty of our conclusions, not to accept it as merchant, although, if taken for merchant, the passages would substantially add to our knowledge of the conditions of trade. Philological experts must discuss and substantially agree before we can use such doubtful passages as evidences of the economic life of the time.

Even in sifting the evidence which is certain as to its meaning, we must use considerable discretion in selecting passages for our purposes. We must remember that the current practice and ideas tend to be reflected in the language. Such study from the language itself is of importance in understanding the economic progress attained, inasmuch as the Vedas were written for religious purposes, disregarding or at least not realizing the economic aspects. Therefore, economic matters are alluded to in so far as they are required for comparisons and metaphors, and in so far as they are directly the objects prayed for. Even when we do not get direct materials to prove the development of any art or the practical effect of any institution, we can deduce, in general terms, the progress that was made along any line by the mere mention of details about it. For example, chariot was, in the period of the Rig Veda, one of the most useful objects for purposes of war. The complex parts of the chariot as mentioned in many passages show that chariot-building as an art was very highly developed. The mere mention of wheels, spokes, felly, axlehole, rim, fore part of the pole (*pranga*), nave of the wheel, etc., shows that the chariot must have been an ancient counterpart of the modern wheeled carriage. Under such circumstances, although the actual process of

construction is unknown, the description sufficiently warrants the assumption of good progress made in a particular art. Indeed, argument along this line must be frequent in the building up of the economic history of the Vedic period. We have, therefore, even at the risk of being uninteresting, collated such descriptions to prove the prevalence of a particular industry or to prove the existence of any social institution.

In this task of investigating into the economic life of the time, we have, not received much assistance from the existing authorities on the Vedas. Economic history as such of the Vedic period has not as yet been especially studied by anyone. There have been commentaries and translations, both Indian and European; there have been some very brilliant studies of the family life and of the religion of the Vedas, which throw considerable light on the proper understanding of our subject so far as these indirectly affect the economic unit. But, as already mentioned, all these deal with the whole of the Vedic period and, as a consequence, not infrequently fall into the error of general assertions about the earliest period from what they find only in the later Samhitas or Brahmanas. So far as these can be separated and utilized for the earlier period we have attempted to do so; on doubtful points we have, for the sake of safety, left them out, and, in rare cases, discussed the differences of opinion among the authorities. Where it has been possible to develop a theory and justify it fully from the growth of events in the past and support it by subsequent facts of the period of the Rig Veda, we have done so. The theory about the origin of private property among the Vedic Indians is one which can be proved by the materials in the Rig Veda without going to the later Samhitas. So also is the theory of navigation.

Of all authorities Macdonell and Keith have been most useful. Their Vedic Index is, of course, for the whole of the Vedic period, including that of the Commentaries. This has naturally diminished its utility for our immediate purposes. But still the collation of facts, and particularly

the discussion of conflicting opinions, although very brief, have been of great use.

With regard to interpretations many authorities have been followed and the most natural ones which have the concurrence of authoritative commentators have been accepted. Sayana's authority must stand very high because he worked practically with the help of many leading pundits assembled for the purpose. Without obvious incongruity or twists of the meaning, he has not been abandoned. Mahidhara and Yaska have also been freely consulted. Of the European scholars Max Müller and Wilson stand out prominently among the English writers. Macdonell and Keith's book has been practically useful in supplying the opinions of the German authorities, Zimmer, Roth, Oldenburg, Pischel, Weber, Geldner, etc. It is a matter for regret that want of sufficient knowledge of the language did not permit a closer contact with the German authorities on the Vedas.

The literature of the Rig Veda has been classified in two ways, viz., according to Ashtakas which are eight and according to Mandalas which are ten. I have followed the latter division. Convenience in reference has been attained by ignoring the Adhyayas and Anuvakas. So that any reference would be with regard to the Mandala, the Sukta, and the verse. All references are given thus and they are from the Rig Veda, except where the name of any other book has been explicitly mentioned.

I have purposely refrained from using the system of diacritical marks because this book is not meant to be a technical study of any Sanskrit literature, but an economic history of India, and because, to the readers of such a book, the diacritical marks, instead of being a help, are a source of confusion. The main purpose of the book is not to study the Sanskrit names and words, but their significance in comprehending the economic condition of the people of the period of the Rig Veda.

CHAPTER I.

FAMILY.

THE Aryan family in its earliest stages has been the same everywhere, in Greece, in Rome as well as in India. It is not our intention to go through all the details of family life, because that would not be for our immediate purpose, which is to study the political and the economic aspects of Vedic life. Moreover, the Vedic family has been already studied by many authorities. But we must at the same time recognize that the family unit affects, in a large measure, the political unit, and determines, to some extent, the economic organization of a nation. Therefore, we need know something about the family itself. That it was of the patriarchal type is certain. The father and the *griha-pati* are separately mentioned, showing that the father was not necessarily the head of the family. His father or his elder brother would naturally be so. The joint family, therefore, must have been pretty big, and, from the different relationships that were recognized within the family folds, it is clear that the constituents of the family were mostly agnates, except in the case of the sonless father of the only daughter. The diverse relations must have made the family a big one. Moreover, considering that in the earliest stages of the history of a nation, family is the only form of social association when the State has not grown, the disintegration of the family is less probable, if the race wants to preserve its military skill and communal organization. Both these are found, in an advanced state, in the Rig Veda itself, so that from this side also the family can be proved to have been a big one.¹ To avoid traversing

¹ For similar condition of the Græco-Roman society see Coulanges' *The Ancient City*.

the same path which has been done by others, we shall here study only some of the institutions of the Aryan family which will help us to understand the polity.

Gotra.

The word *gotra* as it occurs in the Rig Veda,¹ has indeed been interpreted variously and, in view of the later use of the word to mean that family organization corresponding to the Greek phratry and Roman cury, the attempt has not infrequently been made to project the later idea into the passages occurring in the Rig Veda. The later meaning may have been a natural development, but the original meaning was probably "herd"—herd of cattle in particular. Wilson, however, translates it by clouds, which seems to be erroneous, the only relevant point being that Indra, in connection with whose name the word *gotra* is always used in the Rig Veda, was associated with the clouds; but so was he associated with the release of the cattle of the Angirasas from Pani. The fact, however, is quite clear that in the Rig Veda we cannot associate *gotra* with the special family organization of a later age, and this is so in spite of the striking similarity of such a conception of the family among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Evidence thus from Indian sources is wanting for Fustel de Coulanges' theory² as to the development of ideas about the phratry and the cury as institutions existing in their inception at least at a time when the Aryans were still undispersed. Or, the counter-theory must be put forth that the Indo-Aryans started from the original Asiatic home, wherever that might have been, at a time when these institutions had not developed sufficiently to leave any permanent traces upon the social institutions of the Aryan families. But we must be as cautious in accepting this theory of the phratry and cury as in rejecting it, since we argue from the negative point of view only, viz., want of evidence in ancient Indian literature, which, we know, has not come down to us in any complete form. The denial involves the further difficulty of explaining the origin and growth

¹i, 51, 3; ii, 17, 1; x, 103, 7; etc. ²*The Ancient City*.

of the *gotra* as a clan organization during the Brahmana period, and the Brahmanas always assume that they are merely explaining the Samhitas.

But though we must reject the *gotra* as a clan institution, that is, as a bond of relationship, we find ample evidence in the Rig Veda of two facts, viz., kinship and the patriarchal type of family organization. The latter is a peculiar type found universally in all the Aryan branches of the human race. Angirasa, as the original ancestor who established the worship of fire (Agni), is referred to very frequently, and is also deified in the later portions of the Rig Veda.

Kinship.

Similar forms of kinship may be explained as the result of the growth of similar institutions under similar conditions of life, the stage of civilization being substantially the same among the earliest Greeks, Romans, and Hindus. The backward condition in this respect of the other Aryan branch, the Teutons, is of course easily explained by their too long contact with and too much assimilation of barbarians.

This kinship has been variously expressed in the Rig Veda with very divergent meanings of the same words. *Jnati* is found in the earlier portion of the Rig Veda as meaning only the members of a joint family sleeping in the same paternal house. Rishi Samyu, while singing the praise of Indra, the great deity of the Rig Veda period, calls him the slayer of Vritra the Asura, and the protector of all of "us," the members of the family at worship, and he uses the word *jnati* to signify this.¹ But this word has been more widely used to include all relations, not necessarily of the same paternal family, by Rishi Vasukarna, while singing for the Viswadevas, the latter being asked to be as affectionate to the worshippers as their relations are to them.² Rishi Surya, the daughter of Savitri, sang in praise of marriage, and there she confined the word *jnati* to the kinsmen of the bride only.³ From this conflict one fact is patent enough and that is that

¹ vi, 45, 5.

² x, 46, 14.

³ x, 85, 28.

jñati signified relationship which was not necessarily confined to the original by narrow bounds of the paternal family, thus recognizing relations, if not as a corporate body or institution, at least as members for whom the people of the time felt and whom they remembered even when worshipping their deities for the narrow ends of material welfare of the family. The word *jñati* is more universal in its later interpretation, but other words equally significant occur in the Rig Veda. Rishi Hiranyastupa, in propitiating Agni, another favourite of the Rig Veda period, goes much further and tells the deity: "We are thy kinsmen," the actual word used being *jami*.¹ Rishi Gotama, with greater deference to divinity, uses the same word when, in a prayerful mood, he asks the god Agni as to who are his kinsmen.² Again, Raja Vishagir's sons, the five Rishis,³ in invoking Indra as their protector, say that Indra went to war with his kinsmen.⁴ In i, 124, 6, Wilson interprets *ajamim na parivrinakti jamim* as "neglects not to give the joy of sight of her own or of a different nature." Its special meaning of sister is not unusual. Rishi Kutsa, in addressing Indra and Agni jointly, considers them as kinsmen and relations using *sajata*, a rare word in the Rig Veda.⁵ Rishi Viswamitra again uses the word *sabandhu* in establishing kinship between Agni on the one hand and sun, heaven, and earth on the other.⁶ Rishi Sobhari, however, in addressing the Maruts, uses the same word to mean relations by common origin,⁷ thus practically corresponding to the use of *jñati* by Rishi Samyu.

Husband and Wife.

Thus establishing the truth that kinship as such, even external to the paternal house, was recognized by the people of the time, let us see, in outline, the organization of the family in its other special relationships. The most important was of course that of husband and wife. The

¹ i, 31, 10.

² i, 75, 3.

³ Rikraswa, Ambarisha, Sahadeva, Bhayamana, and Suradhas, i, 100, 17.

⁴ i, 100, 11.

⁵ i, 109, 1.

⁶ iii, 1, 10.

⁷ viii, 20, 21.

position of the husband was undoubtedly the same as that in the sister families of Greece and Rome. This is abundantly clear from the Rishis themselves who were rulers of families. The position of the wife is not so clear nor so widely known. The word *dampati* is used in many senses. One use of it is by Rishi Paruehchhepa in his hymn to Agni.¹ He means evidently preserver of the house, since it applies to Agni. But it has been used as householder² and as husband and wife.³ In all cases where it means husband and wife the importance has been uniformly given to their unity of mind and the real happiness that they derive from marriage. The position of wife as part of the husband, even when invoking the gods and offering sacrifices, clearly demonstrates her high rank in the ancient family. This fact will be made patent if we follow the rights and duties of the wife as depicted in the Rig Veda. The desolate condition of the wife⁴ on the demise of her husband is significant. We shall have occasion to discuss this in connection with the widow. The sentiment, strong and abiding, that is the perennial bond between man and wife was as strongly felt and as fully recognized. Rishi Kavasha (more properly Rishi Aksha), in picturing the gamester and dicer, makes him repent so sincerely that we at once see the natural man behind the sinner, the sinner who has abused his rights as husband and neglected his duties, while the patient and faithful soul of his wife has not swerved an inch and has persevered to the last in order to see her husband repent for his excesses. The husband recognizes the abyss into which he has fallen and wonders that his wife was never angry with him nor overcome with shame, but was ever kind and compassionate to him and his friends, the latter perhaps the cause of his fall. And the husband is remorseful that he has abandoned her for his inordinate passion for gambling.⁵ The penitence of the sinner is all the more pathetic because now he is tired even of gambling. If this picture of the

¹ i, 127, 8.² viii, 69, 16; viii, 84, 7.³ v, 3, 2; viii, 31, 5; x, 10, 5; x, 68, 2; x, 85, 32; x, 95, 12.⁴ x, 18, 8.⁵ x, 34/2, 3, 13.

poet is mere imagination without any bearing on the facts of life, it is an incredibly precise record of the psychology of the repentant sinner and an unusually accurate delineation of cultured human life. It would in fact be an anachronism. And if the picture be representative of the facts of actual life, as it most probably is, it only shows the depth of feeling of the man, his intellectual and moral perception, as also the inspiration, the discipline, and the abounding love of the woman, to whom and for whom afterwards he relents.

The affection of the husband for his wife must have been universally recognized, for we find Rishi Archan asking Savitri to hasten to her worshippers even as a husband hastens to his wife.¹ The lighter aspects of marital life were not unknown. The wife used to adorn herself for the attraction of the husband, even as she does in the twentieth century, though with a different taste. Rishi Vamadeva, in his hymn to Agni in an earlier sukta, calls upon the deity to come to the altar which has been well decorated for the purpose, just as a devoted wife puts on elegant garments to gratify her husband.² The word *patni* also occurs very frequently in the sense of wife.

Mother.

Another word *nari* also meaning wife,³ woman,⁴ and mother⁵ comes up again and again. Indrani, in addressing Indra, especially speaks of the mother as one who institutes all ceremony and who is the mother of male offspring. This shows her high position by virtue of religion and as progenitor of the species.⁶ Sisu sings in *pankti* metre about the acts and occupations of domestic life.⁷ Mother (*nana*) is here not very gloriously described as throwing corn upon the grinding stone. But this gives a very good workable hint as to the nature of her occupation generally, which must have been management of the household and performance of the homely duties of a primarily agricultural life.

¹ x, 149, 4.

² vi, 3, 2.

³ viii, 77, 8.

⁴ vii, 60, 8; x, 18, 7; x, 86, 11.

⁵ vii, 20, 5; x, 86, 10.

⁶ x, 86, 10.

⁷ ix, 112, 3.

Father.

Pitri is a common name for father. Some authorities derive it from the onomatopoetic syllable, *pa*. If this theory is correct, then the formation of the word must have been reached in the original home of the Aryans, since we find *pater* among the Romans as well. But if the word be derived from Sanskrit root, "*pa*," to protect, then its meaning becomes more consistent. Because, whatever might have been the origin of the word, the fact remains that *pitri* meant primarily protector in Sanskrit as well as in Latin and Greek, whereas fatherhood was conveyed by an entirely different word, *janitri* in Sanskrit, *genitor* in Latin, and *gennetae* in Greek. So we see that the derivation of *pitri*, *pater*, from root *pa* is very likely, but it is now hopeless to attempt to be positive for want of any materials bearing on the point.

The control of the father of the family (*grihapati*)¹ over the members was carried in Greece and Rome to its logical extremes; and it required a series of revolutions before the bondage, for such it became, could be removed for giving free scope to the civic ideas that grew up with the later and wider conceptions connected with the gods of physical nature as they developed in the West.² In India we find no such revolution. The causes of this seem to be mainly three. The omnipotence of the father was never carried to any excesses which might naturally, as in the West, recoil on itself. Secondly, the gods of physical nature were assimilated at an early date to the religious beliefs; or more properly, their predominance in the Vedic religion existed without shaking the foundations of ancestor worship. Finally, civic ideas as distinguished from those relating to family did not grow consistently in India, and the earliest development of castes and classes smoothed the whole machinery by removing any possible ground for friction.

So, we see the son in the family subordinate to the father in all respects; but the proper functions of each already

¹ vi, 53, 2.

² Coulanges: *The Ancient City*.

assigned and neither attempting to extend his own jurisdiction at the cost of the other. During the period of the Rig Veda, it was harmony on the whole, and we do not come across any passage which deliberately attempts to disillusion us on the point. The limited scope of our inquiry does not permit us to go later than the Vedic period, or it would have been possible to prove that the early development of castes and classes mainly influenced the social structure of the Indo-Aryans. The later polity was particularly fortunate in being able to assimilate the organization of the caste into the body politic—the village community of the Aryan race. The strength thus attained can be easily imagined from the post-Norman English polity when it was able, under William, the Henries and Edwards, to assimilate the clan organization of the shires and hundreds as integral parts of the monarchical hegemony.¹ Thus only could England escape decrepitude and inanition from which the mediæval European polity suffered so much, by assimilating strength, and without dissipating energy in combating the clan institutions. Thus, also it seems probable, was the ancient Hindu polity saved and strengthened by assimilating the class organization into the later village community. Of the latter, however, traces there are even in the Vedic age, though not much in the Rig Veda Samhita.

Marriage.

It seems from various passages in the Rig Veda that marriage usually took place between grown-up persons of their own independent choice. At least this is certain that it was not obligatory to get the girl married in any case, as was the prevalent custom in a later age. Rishi Somahuti, in addressing Indra, claims wealth from the deity just as a virtuous maiden growing old under the paternal roof claims to be supported by her parents.² The very context shows that it was not unusual to grow old as a maiden, and her right, moral at least, to be supported

¹ Jenks : *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages*, Chapter iii.

² ii, 17, 7.

as an integral part of the family naturally suggests its frequency. This right too must have been considered to be a social force, otherwise the strength of the claim on Indra for wealth is proportionately reduced. The story of Ghosha, daughter of Kakshivat, the Brahnavadini, is pathetic to a fault. The girl was most probably suffering from leprosy,¹ for the removal of which and for a husband she prayed to the Aswins, the physicians of the gods. We hear in an earlier hymn that Ghosha succeeded in her endeavours, and that the Aswins bestowed on her a husband² and restored her to youth and beauty. If we turn to the hymns of Ghosha herself to the Aswins we find her addressing the deities as if they were the good fortune of a maiden growing old in her father's house, and in them we find a touch of her own sad experiences. She is grateful to them who are the preservers of the famishing, protectors of the fallen, the blind, and the feeble.³ "They call you the physicians of the Sacrifice."⁴

There is one significant hint of love amongst youths in a passage of the Rig Veda. Rishi Kutsa, in addressing Surya, says that he follows the dawn just as a man follows a young and elegant woman.⁵ This picture is quite by the way, but it impresses one with the idea that the simile had its counterpart in actual life. This belief is further confirmed by the references which we find in the Rig Veda to the mutual affection of lovers. One passage⁶ is a bit obscure, and there have been interpretations according to which she has been ranked as the wife of a man. But another reference⁷ is clearly indicative of such free love which was, it seems, as freely professed. Soma is praised as a woman praises her lover. Rishi Kavasha, addressing the gamester and dicer, even in repentance says that the rattling of the dice draws him away to the gambling place even as a harlot hastens to the place of assignation.⁸ There is at least one reference to the presents of a youthful gallant to a maiden, which are described as lavish.⁹ The

¹ i, 122, 5.⁴ x, 39, 3; x, 40, 5.⁷ ix, 32, 5.² i, 117, 7.⁵ i, 115, 2.⁸ x, 34, 5.³ i, 112, 8.⁶ i, 167, 3.⁹ i, 117, 18.

prevalent belief in magic and spells naturally led to another curious custom with regard to the meeting of lovers. The girl, in her anxiety to secure secrecy for her lover's meetings, invoked Indra,¹ to put to sleep all the members of the house. Even the dog must be put to sleep! In another passage reference is made to the awakening of the sleeping mistress by the gallant lover.² In the latest Rig Veda period we find our final confirmation of the theory that marriage was between grown-up men and women. Savitri's invocation, as embodied in x, 85, 29 and the subsequent slokas, gives a full description of things just after the marriage, which are only possible in the case of a woman who has, previous to marriage, attained the age of puberty.

From all this it seems abundantly clear that the women used to marry after they had passed the age of minority and when they could discriminate. The very fact that before marriage there existed the custom of wooing proves its truth. Rishi Sankusuka, son of Yama, clearly refers to the dead husband as one who wooed and won the woman as his wife.³ Rishi Ghosha, in addressing the Aswins, also expresses this idea when she asks them as to who brings them to the sacrifice like unto a woman bringing her husband to herself.⁴

Other Relations.

If we glance at the other recognized relationships, we are equally struck by the early and complete organization of the family. The newly married wife, on going to her husband's home, is advised to behave properly towards the members of this new family; and in this enumeration, besides the father-in-law and the mother-in-law, the husband's brothers (the word is *devri*) are mentioned.⁵ Similarly we find recognition of the wife's brother (*syala*),⁶ though not as a member of the husband's family, since he must be naturally the member of the family of the wife's father. In x, 85, 46, above we find that the advice is given that the wife should behave like a queen to the

¹ vii, 55, 8.

² x, 40, 2.

³ i, 134, 3.

⁴ x, 85, 46.

⁵ x, 18, 8.

⁶ i, 109, 2.

sister of the husband (*nanadar*) who is evidently recognized as a member of the husband's family. This was of course so till her marriage and entrance into her husband's family. Grandson and grand-daughter (*napat* and *napatri*) were evidently members of the family.¹ The position of the father-in-law (*svasura*) and mother-in-law (*svasru*) naturally follows from that of the husband and wife in the family. They are frequently mentioned in the Rig Veda,² but all these occur only towards the end of the Rig Veda. This fact may be interpreted in two ways:—(i) That these relationships were not recognized as of sufficient nearness to be vital parts of the inter-family relationships, or that in the pastoral stage preceding the settled agricultural life of the Vedic Aryans, the wife once married followed the family of the husband in its wanderings, having not much to do with her father's family except by happy surprise meetings in the course of migration. (ii) That the marriage itself was not a religious or social bond, but merely the living together of the man and woman, so that the woman left her father's home perhaps by stealth or by force, and severed for ever her connection with her father's family. But in view of the scanty evidence we cannot be positive in favour of either. The later explanations in post-Rich Samhitas and the Brahmanas are not reliable as such, since they are, at least with regard to these matters, merely the reading of prevalent ideas into the more ancient texts. With the recognition of *svasura* and *svasru* also comes that of the daughter-in-law, *snusa*.³

Polygamy.

Polygamy is admittedly a feature of the age. The word *sapatni* (co-wife) is used in connection with the sun in an early passage of the Rig Veda.⁴ But more direct references to polygamy as a recognized and usual system are abundant throughout the Rig Veda. Rishī Nodhas, in his hymn to Indra, compared the devotion of the worship-

¹ vi, 20, 11.

² x, 28, 1; x, 34, 3; x, 85, 46; x, 95, 12.

³ x, 86, 13. ⁴ iii, 6, 4.

pers of the deity to that of affectionate wives to a loving husband.¹ The singular use of husband with the plural of wife is to be noticed particularly, otherwise this reference might be taken as of doubtful authority. The same idea is intended in another passage,² and although here husband also is used in the plural, the sense conveyed is of polygamy, the contiguous fingers (plural) loving Agni (singular). Rishi Kutsa mentions³ the two wives of Kuyava, but the passage may be interpreted as expressing the custom of the non-Aryans, Kuyava being an Asura. Even then we should expect some surprise expressed, if the custom were a novel one to the Aryan eyes. And in view of the earlier passages cited, it seems conclusive that polygamy as a social institution was well established among both the Aryans and the non-Aryans long before the former settled down in India. The passage in the next sukta⁴ gives perhaps a dim picture of the real affection that could still subsist between the husband and the co-wives at the same time. But this picture of harmony in the early portion of the Rig Veda changed considerably later on.⁵ Another passage⁶ referring to polygamy has been variously interpreted, some, particularly Wilson, reading wife as singular. The same idea of polygamy is conveyed by Rishi Agastya,⁷ comparing the praises of the worshippers as generating the most fragrant fruit with the bearing of children by wives to their husband. In another passage⁸ Indra is compared to a raja dwelling with his wives, from which we can fairly gather some ideas as to the royal harem which was so overwhelmingly full in later periods. In another passage of the same Mandala,⁹ Indra is proclaimed as capable of possessing all the cities of the Asuras as a husband possesses his wives. The term possession used in this connection is significant, perhaps as a description of the status of the wives in general. In later days we find that the *dharma stri*, or the first wife, is given a very respectable position, but the others are neglected,

¹ i, 62, 11.⁴ i, 105, 8.⁷ i, 186, 7.² i, 71, 1.⁵ x, 145.⁸ vii, 18, 2.³ i, 104, 3.⁶ i, 112, 19.⁹ 26, 3.

the fourth wife, the *palagali*, for instance, is the least respected.¹ In fact, it seems not very unnatural that each successive wife was less respected than her predecessor. The continuity of polygamy throughout the Rig Veda period is very well proved by various references in the text. Rishi Krishna² says that his praises embrace Maghavat (i.e., Indra) as wives embrace a husband. The contrast in numbers is a patent proof of the institution. The last unambiguous reference to polygamy is by Rishi Budha,³ where, addressing the Viswadevas, he goes on delineating upon the preparation of soma juice. The last passage⁴ is interpreted by some as "*a wife*," the exact word being *parivrikta*.

We have already referred to the fact that the harmony of domestic life as foreshadowed in i, 105, 8, relaxed considerably. In fact, in the last Mandala we find that the co-wives are so jealous of one another for the affection of the husband that each compasses the death of all the others. Indrani⁵ chants a hymn which is enjoined on a co-wife to sing for the purpose of securing the husband to herself. It does not lead to any effort of the imagination to reconstruct mentally the actual state of things which were substantially the same down to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Polyandry.

It has been a moot point whether polyandry ever existed among the Aryans. The more general theory of Morgan⁶ that *mutterrecht* preceded the patriarchal stage of society is, so far as the Aryans are concerned, based on analogy only. It is supposed that *mutterrecht* existed before the paternal family. Therefore, we ought to expect to hear of polyandry, the basis of *mutterrecht*, in the earlier portion of the Rig Veda. But we find no such reference. On the contrary, in one of the latest suktas of the last Mandala⁷ of the Rig Veda there are a few slokas which

¹ Satapatha Brahmana, xiii, 4, 1, 8; 5, 2, 8.

² x, 43, 1.

³ x, 101, 11.

⁴ x, 102, 11.

⁵ x, 145.

⁶ *Ancient Society*.

⁷ x, 85, 37-43.

apparently refer to polyandry. In sloka 37, for example, the bride is certainly one in number whereas Pushan is asked to inspire *her* in whom *men* may sow seed, who may be devoted to us, and in whom animated by desire we may get progeny. The next sloka again requests Agni to give husbands back to their wives with male off-springs; slokas 39-40 may be interpreted to oppose this theory, but their force, in this direction, goes only so far as to attenuate the modern repulsion for polyandry by making the woman reside with one husband after another—first Soma, then the gandharva, next Agni, and finally the worshipper. The difficulty in establishing polyandry as an institution in the ancient Vedic family is the fact that it occurs in this one passage only, and that too is modified by the subsequent slokas. It cannot at the same time be authoritatively denied even if we connect this particular passage with the not infrequent amours.¹

Widow.

Vidhava or widow occurs only in the later portions of the Rig Veda. In x, 40, 80, she is mentioned as requiring the protection of the deities. A woman bereft of her husband (for the word *vidhava* does not occur here) goes to her male relatives, perhaps for support.² But she does not, as in later days, immolate herself on the funeral pyre of the husband. In a later passage Rishi Sankusuka³ in his hymn intends it to be repeated by the brother of the husband, on the latter's death, to the widow, asking her to rise and leave the lifeless corpse of her deceased husband. Suttee, therefore, did not exist as a social institution among the early Aryans. Further proof is furnished by two very clear references to the re-marriage of widows. The above sloka in reality suggests that the husband's brother was inviting the widow to his household as his wife, and the Rishi must have approved of such a conduct as the prevalent custom of the time. The second passage is beyond all doubt and is very explicit. Ghosha in her hymn to the Aswins asks the deities as to who brings them to the sacri-

¹ *Vide* Chapter II.

² i, 124, 7.

³ x, 18, 8.

fice as on her couch a widow brings her husband's brother.¹ Another passage in the Rig Veda² is interpreted by some, Pischel for example, as referring to the re-marriage of a woman whose husband has not been heard of for a long time. This is the ring of the later authority providing a second husband in the event of any of the five misfortunes.³ But this meaning of the sloka in the Rig Veda seems to be forced and in any case it is not borne out by the edition of Sayanacharya, whose authority in this respect seems to be rightly unassailable.

The Daughter's Son.

The funeral oblations of a sonless man have formed the subject of many discussions in a later age. What has been latterly called the *putrika putra* is advocated by all the textual authorities of modern Hindu law. Rishi Kakshivat's⁴ description of the widow has been interpreted by Sayanacharya as conferring upon her the right to offer the funeral cakes to her progenitors. If this interpretation is correct, then this passage in the Rig Veda refers to *putrika*. It is not our present function to enter into the discussion of the probability of such an interpretation in the light of the then accepted religious beliefs of the time. But Sayana's authority is so great that one is tempted to accept it in the absence of any material incongruity. Rishi Viswamitra in another passage⁵ says that *shasadvahnih*, the sonless father, regulating the contract, refers to his grandson, the son of his daughter, and, relying on the efficiency of the rite, honours the son-in-law with valuable gifts. So the *putrika putra* is practically adopted in the place of the son. He stipulates that his daughter's son, *duhitur napatyam*, shall be his son. This mode of affiliation is even now recognized by Hindu Law, the Dayabhaga School considering such an adoption as highly meritorious. But another passage,⁶ though obscure, seems to distrust all

¹ x, 40, 2.

² vi, 49, 8.

³ *Nashite mrite prabrajite klive cha patile patau,
Panchasvaptsu narinam patiranyo bidhiyate.*

—Manu Samhita.

⁴ i, 124, 7.

⁵ iii, 31, 1.

⁶ vii, 4, 7-8.

adventitious members of the family being admitted as adopted sons, these being not *anrina* (free from debt) to their progenitors and gods. They should not be considered as fit for acceptance, for verily they return to their own house. The prayer then goes on: Therefore, let there come to us a son new-born, possessed of food, victorious over foes. This looks like prohibition of adoption as is suggested by some authorities, confining inheritance either to direct descent through a son, or to collateral descent through the son of a daughter. This interpretation is found in Nirukta,¹ which is of a later date. We are tempted to distrust its validity in view of the fact that with regard to the offerings of funeral cakes to progenitors, the daughter's son, *putrika putra*, is as much a foreigner as any other man. But then natural affection, it must be recognized, could have tended to the fiction of considering the daughter's son to be a near relation, especially when the father, being sonless, was tied, by domestic affection, to the daughter only, and perhaps kept the daughter in his house even after her marriage.

Family Ownership.

Family ownership of land has been the subject of great discussion, but whatever may be the later development, there is no trace of it in the Rig Veda. Baden Powell² thinks that it is of later growth and that even then there was no community of ownership in the village, but only ownership of the head of the family with merely moral obligations to the other members. This, he explains, by the growth of *patria potestas* in post-Vedic India. The word *daya* in Hindu Law clearly means inheritance and it occurs even in the Rig Veda,³ but here it means only reward. But that there was property in some form is certain; for example, we find mention of the father's property being divided among the sons in his old age.⁴ But these most probably refer to movables. There is no trace of the family as a land-owning corporation,⁵ so that its later

¹ iii, 3.

² *Indian Village Community*.

³ x, 114, 10.

⁴ i, 70, 10.

⁵ Baden Powell, B. H.: *Indian Village Community*.

growth must have been post-Vedic. In fact the general impression from the Rig Veda is that property did not belong to the family, but to its head. As to the exact nature of such property, we shall have occasion to deal with that later on.¹

It is equally uncertain whether women could hold any property for themselves. There is one obscure passage in iii, 31, 5-7. The other passage² in the Rig Veda may be interpreted to refer to the property of men rather than that of their wives.

As to child life during the period of gestation there is an illuminating passage in the Rig Veda³ which is called by Sayanacharya as the *garbhashravinyupanishad* or the liturgy of child-birth. Its general description need not imply any special knowledge beyond ordinary intelligent observation, but in sloka 8, the uterine membranes are specifically stated, which carries the impression that the intricate anatomy involved in such a distinct nomenclature was well-known. Another reference of perhaps less importance is in the hymns of Rishi Twashtri,⁴ which, however, is in general terms only. An earlier text of Rishi Partardana (Raja)⁵ details the functions at birth, cleansing, decorating, etc., but this is in connection with the preparation of soma juice figuratively described as its birth.

Triumphs.

Festivals in commemoration of triumphs occur very rarely in the Rig Veda. In this respect we are at once impressed by the contrast with the triumphal festivals of ancient Greece and Rome. Rishi Somahuti,⁶ in singing of the ever-youthful Indra, praises the deity as the victorious in battle. Later on, Rishi Bharadwaja,⁷ addressing Indra and Agni, offers them thanksgiving for the recovery of the cows, etc., carried away by the Asuras. Rishi Kutsa,⁸ son of Angirasa, in propitiating Soma Pavamana, enumerates the exhilarating effects of soma juice on Indra and his protecting feats while under its influence.

¹ Vide Chapter VI.

² ix, 96, 17.

³ x, 34, 11.

⁴ ii, 16, 7.

⁵ v, 78, 7-9.

⁶ vi, 60, 2.

⁷ x, 184.

⁸ ix, 97, 47.

CHAPTER II.

MORALITY.

THE morality of the people of the Rig Veda period is a strange mixture of customs not unnatural to a race that is emerging out of an unsettled life to a settled one and realizing the influence of ideas on social life. A brotherless woman, *abhratarah*, seems clearly to be taking to prostitution either for want of proper control or for purposes of livelihood.¹ It must have been a matter of great pity if she were compelled to do so for the latter cause. But the first passage referred to above may be interpreted to mean going over to her deceased husband's brother to be married to him as we have already hinted in connection with the re-marriage of a widow, especially in view of the fact that such marriages were permitted and perhaps, for the sake of her protection and support, even enjoined. The second passage referring to an *abhratarah* refers distinctly to women, adverse to their lords and going astray. So, it seems that, in the absence of the father, the brother was the great and perhaps the only protector if the woman went astray from the husband. The very fact goes to support the view that family organization at that age was not powerful enough to prevent this nor could social opinion effectually restrain people. But the reference² to secrecy with regard to the bearing of illegitimate children tends to prove that social opinion was against it, and it must remain a matter for conjecture whether such opinion restrained the woman effectively, because we cannot discover the extent of such practice in the ancient days. The above passage refers to the bearing of child in secret and of course includes directly those cases where the woman was still the recognized wife in a family

¹ i, 124, 7; iv, 5, 5.

² ii, 29, 1.

and had gone astray without leaving its shelter. This will not seem unusual if we remember that polygamy was extensively practised, and human passions could not be less strong than they are to-day.

The word *sadharani*¹ in the Rig Veda means a common or public woman. The etymological meaning, "belonging to or open to all," strongly suggests the existence of prostitution as an institution. But more positive proof in the form of corroboration or denial does not occur in any other part of the Rig Veda, and the later Samhitas rather confirm the view suggested. Another word *hasra*, meaning courtesan, occurs in the Rig Veda,² but it has been sometimes (though perhaps erroneously) translated as wife. Another word *jara* occurs frequently in the Rig Veda.³ Its meaning is lover, but it is very clear from all the texts that the later meaning of illegitimacy did not yet attach itself to the word in the Rig Veda. In the first sloka cited, Agni is the lover of maidens and the husband of wives, because Agni was the determining element in the nuptial ceremony, terminating maidenhood, and the wife bore an important part in the sacrificial ceremony before the sacred fire. In another passage⁴ the sun is called the lover of the maiden dawn because he always follows the latter. The word *jara*, though innocently used, expresses in one passage⁵ the lover of a woman, but here also the woman is supposed not to be ashamed of her amour, but praises her lover openly. The word⁶ has also been, in one case, used metaphorically, *jara ushasam*, lover of the dawn, i.e., Agni.

It is evident from the conversation between Yama and his sister Yami⁷ that certain limitations were put on marriageable persons. A brother could not marry a sister, but at this stage at least it was not universally recognized as such, since the argument of Yami shows clearly that she wanted to marry Yama,⁸ her brother, in good faith and was not cognizant of such prohibition. Yama⁹ also argues that in subsequent ages sisters would choose as a husband one

¹ i, 167, 4.² i, 124, 7.³ i, 66, 4; i, 117, 18; i, 134, 3.⁴ i, 152, 4.⁵ ix, 32, 5.⁶ vii, 9, 1; io, 1.⁷ x, 10.⁸ x, 10, 10.

who was not a brother. This proves that such marriages were not yet widely known to be prohibited. But the union of father and daughter was clearly condemned as it was in the case of Rudra.¹ The practice has been condemned in another passage,² though the meaning is obscure here. Finally, perhaps through the growth of ideas, the union of brother and sister has been actually condemned³ as the work of an evil spirit to exterminate whom the prayer is instituted. But here the uncertainty is whether it condemns the union in marriage, or, as it is more probable, their illegitimate connection.

Thieves and robbers are variously referred to in the Rig Veda as *taskara*⁴ who move in the dusk of the evening⁵ and who are bold, lurking in the forest to seize upon a traveller.⁶ *Taskara*, it seems, approached more to a robber than to a thief, he being supposed to carry away things openly. *Stena*⁷ properly represents a thief though once used in the sense of a robber.⁸ In the Rig Veda we find frequent mention of another word conveying the idea of a thief. That is *tayu*⁹ stealing an animal,¹⁰ carrying off a garment,¹¹ keeping concealed the article that he has stolen,¹² being invisible himself,¹³ falsifying,¹⁴ committing penance for stealing by nourishing the animal that he has stolen.¹⁵ *Steya* also occurs in one passage¹⁶ to mean a thief. Robber (*vamragu*) is mentioned also in the Rig Veda.¹⁷

From the above enumeration of offences recognized by the earliest texts it is evident that the social life was based on the family system, and that, though that organization was pretty nearly complete in itself, social opinion and social morality were only passing through the formative stage. The early text does not condemn incest as a recognized offence, whereas the later one perhaps does so. Murder is treated as an offence in the later Samhitas, as are also patricide (*pitrihan*) and matricide (*matrihan*). But no trace of this is to be

¹ x, 61, 5-7.⁴ vii, 65, 3.⁷ ii, 28, 10; 42, 3.¹⁰ i, 65, 1.¹³ v, 52, 12.¹⁶ vii, 104, 10.² x, 109.⁵ i, 191, 5.⁸ ii, 23, 16.¹¹ iv, 38, 5.¹⁴ vi, 12, 5.³ x, 162, 5.⁶ x, 4, 6.⁹ i, 50, 2.¹² v, 15, 5.¹⁵ vii, 86, 5.¹⁷ x, 4, 6.

found in the Rig Veda. And although we find one reference to the exposure of the son of Agru,¹ not necessarily illegitimate, to be eaten up by ants, yet we cannot say that it was a general practice. Nor in this period do we find any reference to *bhrumahatya* or deliberate killing of the child during the period of gestation. What would come under the modern crime existed only in the form of theft and robbery, and considering the sparse population and unwonted ways this was bound to exist. On the whole, life seems to be simple, religious, and truthful. Certain economic difficulties were experienced,² particularly in the case of women, leading to the profession of the courtesan, but the strength of human passions is not less responsible for the existence of *sadharani*.

¹ iv, 19, 9.

² *Vide* Chapter X,



CHAPTER III.

CASTES AND CLASSES.

THE caste system in India is clearly recognized in the period of the Atharva Veda. Its origin is hopelessly lost, or it grew so slowly that it was unnoticed in its inception. The Rig Veda, of course, recognizes the Aryans as distinguished from the Dasyus, the non-Aryans, but further than this it is not possible to assert with regard to the caste system in the Rig Veda. A later passage of the Rig Veda¹ speaks of the Brahmana, the Rajanya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra, as issuing respectively out of the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet of Purusha. The distinction made here is curiously striking. It is practically the same as in the later Samhitas and the Brahmanas. But the inexplicable fact remains that it is the only passage in the Rig Veda, and that too is so short that it is not possible to attribute to it all the connotation that it involved later on. If the perception of Rishi Narayana was correct, he must have seen the future of the different classes very correctly, and his classification of the order of importance of each class has been only too correct. In any case, unless this passage be regarded as an interpolation, this proves that the caste as it developed later on must have grown very slowly, almost imperceptibly, and the observant Rishi of the Purushasukta was only recording the trend of events that were moulding the social structure. As the passage occurs late in the literature under notice, it cannot be said to be representative of the earlier period, so that it would be erroneous to say that the division into castes, as distinguished from classes, except into Arya and

¹ x, 90, 12.

Dasyu, formed any part of the social polity of the Rig Veda period of the Aryans.¹

Kshatriya.

The word Kshatriya, however, occurs in many passages of the Rig Veda, its usual meaning being royal or of divine authority. As a class the Kshatriyas are recognized as warriors. In one passage² Agni is said to possess the Kshatriya quality of strength. Another use of the word³ clearly recognizes the military order, Trasadasyu having a two-fold empire. The word Kshatriya is most probably intended to convey the idea of a military class in v, 69, 1, or, as Wilson says, it means possessed of strength, thus referring to Indra. Again, Mitra and Varuna are invoked⁴ as Kshatriyas, meaning perhaps sovereigns. These deities are elsewhere⁵ described as sitting down for the office of sovereignty, as in another passage⁶ Varuna is said to exercise supreme dominion, *kshatra* signifying rule or dominion. The good government of a Kshatriya is spoken of in a later passage.⁷

In all the above passages the Kshatriyas are spoken of as the rulers, they being powerful and, as warriors, wielding *kshatra* or dominion. But there are certain other passages⁸ in which the people (*vis*) also are said to fight, the last passage calling them godless. Most of these mean perhaps the vulgar folk rebelling against the higher and ruling classes, since protection of the deities against them is sought. The reference to non-Aryans is not warranted, as in that case the fact would most probably have been specifically mentioned. The doubt that is cast upon the fighting habits of the people arises from the invocation⁹ to Indra for protection against the people and protection in combats, thus distinguishing clearly the people from wars. A remarkable sukta¹⁰ comes towards the end of the Rig

¹ The arguments of Zimmer and Muir are too well known to be discussed here.

² iv, 12, 3.

³ iv, 42, 1.

⁴ vii, 64, 2.

⁵ viii, 25, 8.

⁶ i, 25, 10.

⁷ x, 109, 3.

⁸ i, 69, 3; iv, 24, 4; vi, 26, 1; vii, 79, 2; viii, 96, 15.

⁹ vi, 41, 5.

¹⁰ x, 98.

Veda, proving clearly the right of instituting sacrifices on the part of a Kshatriya. But experts consider the case of Devapi as exceptional. In any case this exception is curious, as by the time of the Rig Veda the priesthood as a class had already been consolidated. An earlier exception is Viswamitra.¹

Purohita was the domestic priest in a later age. In the Rig Veda two passages² occur, the first not necessarily meaning domestic priest, since it refers to the chief deity-priests, Agni and Aditya. The second one explicitly refers to the most learned priests who take the foremost place (in religious ceremonies). This evidently has its source in the institution of domestic priesthood which by this time must have been increasingly manifest.

The professional priesthood is seen practically from the very beginning of the Rig Veda period. Its position is entirely separate from that of monarchy. The fact is somewhat puzzling in conception. A study of the earliest organization of the other branches of the Aryan family reveals the fact that the original leader was the king, the priest, and the head of the fighting host; and there is nothing to suppose that the particular branch that came to India began with a special polity or stepped lightly over some of the stages while retaining fully the wisdom derived from the experience of each. The latter fact is clear from the subsequent history of the race during which, in spite of the predominant influence of the priests (the Brahmanas), there was no attempt on their part to become king *de jure*, although they wielded, through their influence on the ruler, all the powers of the king. Any explanation, however, of this early separation of priesthood from kingship in India must be conjectural; there is no record previous to the Rig Veda, and in the Rig Veda it is recognized as an established institution. Nor can it even be safely conjectured whether such a change took place in India or before the Aryan advent into India. But it seems only rational to say that the greatest probability should be attached to the change having been effected from the co-ordination of power in one

¹ iii, 33, 8.

² x, 66, 13; x, 70, 7.

man to its separation into priestly, military, and monarchical. The denial of it would bring on the burden of proving that this one branch of the Aryan family, alone out of all others, began with a different system and yet ended with the same separation of powers. On the other hand, we cannot assert in favour of it, inasmuch as it is advisable to recognize the full value of the historical fact that the social polity begins earlier than the political organization and that the extent of development in the former was much greater in the original home of the Aryans than the latter.

Brahmana.

Whatever may have been the exact course of development in the pre-Vedic age, the professional class receiving *dakshina* ¹ for the services performed, existed in the Rig Veda period; and it will be interesting to learn from the various passages in the Rig Veda what was the position, qualification, and function of the Brahmana, as the priest was called. It is necessary in this connection to emphasize that the position of the Brahmana was very high, next, if next at all, to the Kshatriya only. In the post-Vedic age he was undoubtedly the superior, standing above all others. But in the Rig Veda his position seems to be equalled at least by the Kshatriya; and this is quite natural in the state of society when it was fighting its way to the south and the east among a powerful alien population. But his position could not have been ignored even then, since he invoked the deities who were supposed to fight for the Aryans against the Asuras.

One passage ² in which the word Brahmana occurs seems literally to convey its etymological meaning. The four definite grades of speech (which have been variously interpreted) are known to the Brahmanas only, who are described as wise. Three of these are deposited in secret and indicate no meaning (i.e., to the non-initiated or ordinary person). The fourth is spoken by men. The Brahmanas ³ again are called the progenitors and presenters of Soma, which gives a

¹ i, 168, 7; vi, 27, 8; viii, 24, 29; viii, 39, 5; x, 62, 1; x, 107.

² i, 164, 45.

³ vi, 75, 10.

glimpse of their function at the sacrifice. Perhaps they are also called observers of truth (second half of the same sloka) and they are invoked for protection. So that this class of men are looked upon as a superior order of beings capable of some of the godly functions, perhaps supposed to have acquired them by their professional contact with the deity. The Brahmanas, in their performance of sacrificial rites, had to chant *mantras*, sometimes throughout the night, as in the case of the *atiratra* rite,¹ or throughout the year, perennial as it has been interpreted by some, perhaps during the sacrificial session, *gavam ayanam*.² They also practised penance throughout the year, being observant of their vows.³ Rishi Vashistha's hymn on frogs is very illuminating, as is shown above. They are described as worshippers who effuse Soma⁴ and Soma is supposed to pervade the Brahmanas.⁵ The Brahmanas are the friends of the Vedas⁶ "wandering at will in the meanings of the Veda." They are⁷ called learned because they possess the investigated Brahma consisting of knowledge, *Sruti* or divine lore, and thought and wisdom. There is, it seems, a good deal of contempt for the ordinary people, the ploughmen who pursued agriculture. The contact of the Brahmanas in this lower world as of gods in the upper is a necessity to become a Brahmana or an offerer of libations,⁸ which function seems to be obligatory on all respectable householders. The Brahmanas are inferior to gods, sitting down to perform the work of the *hotri*.⁹ In the *Purushasukta*¹⁰ whose Rishi is Narayana, the mouth of Purusha became the Brahmana, which means that the latter was derived or born out of the former. This sloka, as has been discussed previously, is important in connection with the caste organization. This tradition of separate original birth is the foundation of the hereditary character of the Indian caste. The Brahmanas, it seems from a later passage,¹⁰ were in the habit of administering plants as medicines.

¹ vii, 103, 7.² vii, 103, 8.³ vii, 103, 1.⁴ ix, 112, 1.⁵ x, 26, 6.⁶ x, 71, 8.⁷ x, 71, 9.⁸ x, 88, 19.⁹ x, 90, 12.¹⁰ x, 97, 22.

Other Castes.

The Rajanya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra as different castes appear, as has been pointed out, in the last Mandala ¹ of the Rig Veda.

In later Samhitas and particularly in the Brahmanas, we find reference to some classes, called the outcastes, who could not be touched or with whom it would be derogatory to eat together. But *chandala* and *paulkasa* do not even occur anywhere in the Rig Veda. *Vrishala* occurs indeed in the Rig Veda ² and most probably means an outcaste. But the *vrishala* here is not a class name but a general term conveying the idea of degradation attached to the irresponsible and wicked gamester of the hymn.

It is very uncertain whether the tenants as a class existed in the time of the Rig Veda. The word *vesa* occurs in two passages,³ but its meaning is obscure, and for want of further evidence it is impossible to posit their existence as a class, although their existence is probable.

Physicians.

Physicians are widely recognized in the Rig Veda, though it is not clear whether there was any such class as in later days. They must have been held in very high respect, since many gods, the Aswins,⁴ Varuna,⁵ and Rudra,⁶ are frequently called physicians. In a later passage ⁷ the Brahmanas are also said to administer plants with healing effects.

¹ x, 90, 12.

² x, 34, 11.

³ ii, 13, 8; x, 49, 5.

⁴ i, 116, 16; i, 157, 6; viii, 18, 8; viii, 86, 1; x, 39, 3-5.

⁵ i, 24, 9.

⁶ ii, 33, 4-7; vi, 50, 7; ix, 112, 1.

⁷ x, 97, 22.

CHAPTER IV.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY.

TURNING to the settlement of the families on land, we find that the Vedic Aryans lived in villages (*grama*). Whether these villages were close to one another or were scattered far and wide, and, if so, whether there were roads to connect them, cannot be ascertained from the Rig Veda. But the universal practice of certain religious rites and the substantial unity in the development of Vedic life point to the probability that they used to be either close to one another or had means to go from one place to another. The universal habit of early migrations along the course of a river as in the case of the ancient Teutons along the Elbe and in the case of the modern Swiss people may be accepted in the case of the Indo-Aryans. They might have gone along the five rivers of the Punjab, and there is evidence to support that they reached Sind and knew the ocean¹; we also meet with references to the treasures of the sea.² The story of Bhujyu, son of Tugra, is repeatedly mentioned in the Rig Veda. This colonization along the rivers facilitated communication from village to village, and, from analogy in colonization, we can easily imagine that for fear of being lost to the brother families the Vedic Aryans used to settle by the side of the river, just as the early settlers in Australia colonized along the coast only, those of North Canada along the rivers only. There is additional ground to suppose in the case of the Vedic Aryans that they did not go to the interior. The non-Aryans were a powerful race, and the frequent hymns of victories and prayers for protection from the Asuras and Dasyus clearly prove that they were harassed by the latter.

¹ vii, 95, 2.

² i, 47, 6; vii, 6, 7; ix, 97, 44.

In such a case there was the least likelihood of their going in the interior to settle, and breaking off all connection with the main settling places along the rivers.

There was easy communication ¹ between the settlements on the different rivers of the Punjab. Later on, of course, with the pressure of population, they had to move to the east and south-east, but then they did not start in scattered groups but formed continuous or at least connecting villages. Where these were impossible owing to geographical features, they would construct roads to connect one village with another. All this expansion must have been towards the end of the Rig Veda period. And we actually find reference to roads in the Chhandogya Upanishad.²

The existence of villages is seen beyond all doubt even in the Rig Veda period. The resplendent Agni is invoked as the protector of the people in villages.³ The mighty Rudra is propitiated in another sloka ⁴ in order that all things in the village may be well nourished and exempt from disease. Village is also referred to in various other passages in the Rig Veda.⁵ The domestic animals also lived in the village. Of this the proof is clear. Cattle are spoken of as hastening to the village.⁶ Vayu ⁷ or instinct⁸ is said to preside over certain animals, and the rest are recognized to be divided into those that are wild and those that are tame.⁹

The organization of the village is very little known. But there was a village headman of whose functions there is scanty reference. He is called *gramani* or leader of the *grama*. He is said to be the donor of a thousand cows, and the prayer is that he, called the Manu, may never suffer wrong and may his liberality go on spreading in glory with the sun.¹⁰ In this hymn of Rishi Nabhanedhishtha the liberality of Raja Savarni is the subject; thus the leader seems to be identical, in this case at least, with the headman of the village. In another passage¹¹ the head of the village

¹ iii, 33.² viii, 6, 2.³ i, 44, 10.⁴ i, 114, 1.⁵ x, 146, 1; x, 149, 4.⁶ x, 149, 4.⁷ According to Wilson.⁸ According to Colebrooke.⁹ x, 90, 8.¹⁰ x, 62, 11.¹¹ x, 107, 5.

goes in the front (at the sacrifice) bearing the *dakshina* of the priest. From this the communal character of some at least of the religious institutions is suggested, and in these the headman represented the village. Moreover, this passage nullifies Zimmer's attempt to confine the functions of the *gramani* to military ones only. In the days of the Brahmanas he seems to have occupied the same position in the village as the sheriff in the shire before Henry II., discharging both civil and military functions. The actual working out of this system of village life and its relation to the broader life of the kingdom, so far as these can be discovered from the Rig Veda, will more properly come under the next chapter.

One other aspect of the family life in the village remains to be studied. The question can pertinently be raised in this connection whether the Aryans at this stage lived a pastoral or an agricultural life. The answer to this can, it seems, be given more or less definitely. They were settling down to a life of agriculture and indeed agriculture developed very highly. But at the same time pasturage was undertaken universally. The fact is that the pastoral habits were as much in evidence as the agricultural ones. Agriculture, as also their arts and crafts, will be dealt with in their proper places. Here let us see the pastoral aspect of their life.

Though the use of many animals were known in the Rig Veda, we do not actually find their classification into the five sacrificial animals or the seven-fold division of later days. *Pasu*¹ or animal is divided in the Rig Veda into *dvipad* (biped) and *chatuṣpad* (quadruped). This classification evidently includes all living animals including even man. All animals are supposed to possess *vach*² or speech, articulate or inarticulate. The whole species of animals has been further classified, as stated before, into three,³ viz., (a) *vayavya*—those over whom *Vayu* presides, or, according to Dr. Colebrooke, those possessing instinct (evidently of a higher type including perhaps apes, etc.); (b) *aranya*—those that are wild, and (c) *gramya*—those that

¹ iii, 62, 14.² viii, 100, 11.³ x, 90, 8.

are tame. Rishi Narayana speaks of them as being made by Purusha.

Of all the animals the cow¹ was undoubtedly the most important, as we would naturally expect from a people who are yet primarily pastoral. *Go*, denoting cow, is repeatedly mentioned in the Rig Veda as requiring the special protection of the gods; this shows the important functions performed by this animal in the economy of the primitive life. *Gavo dhenavah* are seen doing honour to Indra.² The milch kine, with all the instinct of a mother, hasten to their calves.³ These must have been held in high respect, being, of course, very useful, for otherwise it would have been blasphemous to institute such a comparison. In another passage some evidently of the minor godly personages are found praying, just as the milch kine low for protection.⁴ The proverbial motherly instincts are perceived and recognized in another hymn⁵ where cows in their stalls long for their calves. The Maruts shower abundant food upon the worshippers as a milch cow gives milk to her calf.⁶ The inarticulate speech may have been referred to or at least caressing the animal is suggested in one passage⁷ where cows are said to low to their calves in the stalls. Cattle are referred to again⁸ as being driven by staves. Another prayer⁹ to the Aswins gives cows the position next to the worshippers, thus showing the great solicitude for cattle. They are recognized as such because cows are a means of nourishment. So, they pray that these may not stray from the house of the worshippers nor may they be separated from their calves. Rishi Bharadwaja's hymn¹⁰ to Pushan is in the same strain. Pushan is invoked so that the usual mishaps may not occur to cattle, which are: they may perish, they may be injured, and they may be hurt by falling into a well.¹¹ This latter peril of the cattle also indicates, by the way, another art of the Aryans which is

¹ i, 43, 2; i, 162, 22; vii, 103, 9; viii, 5, 37.

² i, 173, 1.

³ vi, 45, 28.

⁴ x, 95, 6.

⁵ ii, 2, 2.

⁶ ii, 34, 8.

⁷ viii, 88, 1; viii, 95, 1; ix, 12, 2.

⁸ vii, 33, 6.

⁹ i, 120, 8.

¹⁰ vi, 54, 5-6.

¹¹ vi, 54, 7.

still the same. The pastoral character of life is further evidenced from another hymn ¹ where it is said that the first duty of a person who has got the protection of Indra and who is secure in a house is to go to the cows. The ladle filled with the delicious and exhilarating soma juice offered to Indra is very happily compared to the udders of the cows before milking, *adugdha iva dhenava*.² Rishi Nodhas, in propitiating Indra, says that the deity provides the mature (i.e., ready for consumption, or nourishing) and glossy milk within the yet immature cow, whether black or red.³ Finally, we come across a whole hymn of which the subject is cow by Rishi Bharadwaja ⁴ where cows are said to bring good fortune, showing that wealth primarily consisted of cattle—a condition natural enough for pastoral life. They lie down in the stalls and are pleased with the treatment of men, i.e., they are very well cared for. They are also spoken of as prolific. Protection is asked against their loss, and against any hostile weapon falling upon them, so that the master of cattle may be long possessed of them because he performs sacrifices with them and presents them to the gods. Protection is also sought for them against the dust-spurning war horse coming in their midst. Thus protected, the cows of a sacrificer, pleasing the deity, wander about at large without fear. The cows bring affluence (*bhaga*), and they yield the food of the first libation (milk and butter). The cows are addressed for the gift of nourishment, for the growth of the emaciated, unlovely body, for making the house prosperous, great abundance being attributed to them in religious assemblies, *brihad vo vaya uchyaate sabhāsu* ⁵ (interpreted differently, however, by Sayanacharya as *sarvair diyate ityārtha*). The cows ⁶ are blessed in having many calves, grazing upon good pasture and drinking pure water at accessible ponds. May no thief be their master, no beast assail them, and may the fatal weapon (death, perhaps) of Rudra avoid them. Finally, Indra is asked to look after the nourishment of the cows and the vigour of the bull, since the invigoration of the deity (with milk

¹ i, 83, 1.² vii, 32, 22.³ i, 62, 9.⁴ vi, 28.⁵ vi, 28, 6.⁶ vi, 28, 7.

and butter) depends upon them, milk and butter being dependent upon the cows bearing calves.¹

The word *gostha*² is used in the Rig Veda. The later meaning of the word is clearly cowstall, and most probably that is also the meaning in the Rig Veda, but there is a conflict of opinion among very high authorities, some interpreting it as grazing-ground. So also is obscurity attached to the word *svasara*,³ meaning either cowstall or the morning grazing of the cattle. But here it must be remembered that in the Rig Veda we do not find any mention of the three milking and grazing times of the later Samhitas. This meaning was attached to the word at a later period, when there was another word for cowshed, *samgarvini*.⁴ The Rig Veda Aryans recognized the value of, and possessed, good pastures. *Suyavasa* is the word for it occurring in the Rig Veda.⁵ The word is also interpreted by some as cowstall in another passage,⁶ but this seems to be less probable.

Before finishing our study of the Rig Veda life, we should look at one other feature of early society. Population in an expanding society needs to grow. This is more so in a society that is beset with environmental difficulties such as crossing, or managing a journey in, fast-flowing rivers (the Punjab rivers were so in the time even of Alexander⁷), or in clearing vast jungles grown wild into fertile soil, or occupying the whole of a territory naturally forming a sort of protection, e.g., the whole tract between the two branches of a river. In addition, if there is the other difficulty of fighting a race well organized for a primitive time and securely settled on the land, the additional loss due to warfare and the greater need for the growth of population are evident. With all the above conditions operating, the early Aryans in India must be expected to hail the birth of male children as a bliss. Naturally we find, in the praises of women, references to this quality of increasing the population emphasized. In a later hymn⁸ of the Rig

¹ vi, 28, 8.

² i, 191, 4; vi, 28, 1; viii, 43, 7.

³ ii, 2, 2; viii, 88, 1.

⁴ Aitareya Brahmana, iii, 18, 14.

⁵ i, 42, 8; vii, 18, 4.

⁶ vi, 28, 1.

⁷ Vincent Smith: *Alexander*.

⁸ x, 86.

Veda, we find that the mother, Indrani in this case, is honoured, because, among other qualities, she is the mother of male offspring.¹ It is said again in a subsequent sloka² that Parshu, daughter of Manu, bore twenty children at once, and the deity is propitiated so that good fortune may befall her who is so prolific.

¹ x, 86, 10 ; x, 86, 13.

² x, 86, 23.

CHAPTER V.

POLITY.

THE polity of the Indo-Aryans, like their family, is not a new thing to the modern world. The nature of the ancient Greek, Roman, and Teutonic organizations has been so strikingly similar that the science of comparative politics has been able to establish the growth of the elements in the original home of the Aryans. We have already seen that the Kshatriya or the fighting class had grown in the period of the Rig Veda. Its position was very high indeed, and as we shall presently see its occupation was pretty hard. The Brahmanas, as a priestly class, also came to be differentiated. There may have been exceptions, but that does not vitiate the main theory. Purohitas were mainly recruited from this class, so that, national or domestic, the Aryan had already confided his spiritual progress in the keeping of the Brahmanas. In other words, mediation was the first, as mediation is the last, word of Hindu spiritual growth so far as that is to be attained through the formal rites enjoined by the *Shastras*. The position cannot indeed be properly contemplated from the modern viewpoint of philosophical abstraction. The Brahmanas, as their name implies, were in reality the depository of the knowledge of Brahma. It would be contradictory to historical science to say, as has been suggested by some very high authorities, that the whole institution originated in, or was based upon, an attempt on the part of the Brahmana oligarchy to capture the highest posts of authority in social life by enslaving, and appealing to, the spiritual aspect—the most easily moved one—of a nation's life.

The third class was the agricultural people, practically the whole population being included under this. Of course,

there are passages in the Rig Veda¹ where it is doubtful what exactly is the idea conveyed by the word *vis*. The most consistent meaning can be gathered only by interpreting it as settlement or dwelling. This also would be the etymological meaning. It may have been an after-growth or it may have been a simultaneous use of the term, but it has been used² for the subjects of a king. In another passage³ the subjects willingly pay homage to the prince. Mention is made of the subjects choosing a king and yet they are spoken of as smitten with fear.⁴ Indra is propitiated in another passage⁵ to render the subject people payer of taxes. Elsewhere the same word has been used as people in general.⁶ In all these cases, it may be noted, *vis* signifies the people, either general or as subjects, and not a settlement. The word has again been used in connection with the Arya people.⁷ In an obscure passage⁸ it seems to mean people in conjunction with the divine. With *dasa* the word is similarly used.⁹ A significant use of the word is found in the Rig Veda,¹⁰ where it means people and is clearly differentiated from all men (*jana*), as well as sons, kinsmen, and descendants. The opponents of the clan theory have discovered in this the demolition of the theory inasmuch as in that case *vis* would have included descendants. The adherents of the theory equally urge that the distinction between *jana*, the common people, and *vis*, one's own people, contains the germ of the theory, *vis* being all of the same *gotra* or clan. Sometimes it seems, among those obsessed with a theory, that the less the materials to be drawn upon the greater is the vigour with which their cause is urged. Even the brilliant Fustel de Coulanges¹¹ has not been able to escape from this defect. The fact in connection with our point is that from this single passage it is not at all possible to argue either for or against the theory of clan. The above passage read with another¹² as meagre as itself has

¹ iv, 4, 3; iv, 37, 1; v, 3, 5; vi, 21, 4; vi, 48, 8; vii, 56, 22; vii, 61, 3; vii, 70, 3; vii, 104, 18; x, 91, 2.

² E.g. in vi, 8, 4.

³ iv, 50, 8.

⁴ x, 124, 8.

⁵ x, 173, 6.

⁶ E.g. vi, 1, 8; vi, 26, 1; viii, 71, 11.

⁷ x, 11, 4.

⁸ iii, 34, 2.

⁹ iv, 28, 4; vi, 25, 2.

¹⁰ ii, 26, 3.

¹¹ *The Ancient City; The Origin of Property in Land.*

¹² x, 84, 4.

furnished a second series of arguments in favour of the theory. A battle-cry is mentioned here as *visam-visam*. This is interpreted to signify that the army was divided into hosts after the different clans. It is not at all improbable, but we are bound to say that, when we say so, we traverse by imagination and not by proved historical fact. Additional colour is lent to this theory by another reference ¹ to battle as *visoyudhmah*. It is evident that the whole argument, either in favour of the theory or against it, hangs upon the exact meaning of *vis*, which has so many significations that it seems hopeless to attempt to bring it out with any degree of certainty. Finally, there is another use of *vis* ² where it is contrasted with both *griha* (house) and *jana* (all men). The only point that stands out clearly in the midst of all these divergent meanings of the word is that there was the bulk of the people, mostly agricultural, who were never confused with, and were therefore distinct from, the Kshatriya and the Brahmana.

Slaves.

There was, moreover, another class of people, the slaves, whose position, as gathered from the later Samhitas, was similar to that of the serfs in England just after the Norman Conquest. *Dasa* is used for the non-Aryans, as also *dasyn*. But *dasa* equally refers to slaves who were under the control of the Aryans. The fact perhaps is that some of the conquered people were slain, others not exactly conquered were allowed to live independently, while the prisoners of war who escaped death were converted into slaves. In one passage ³ the deity is asked to give, among other things, troops of *dasas*. This would not be a boon but a curse if it is interpreted to mean free non-Aryans, hostile to the Aryans. The worshipper in another passage ⁴ alludes to diligent service like a slave. *Dasa* as slave is referred to again in the eighth Mandala.⁵ The possession of slaves is compared to that of numerous cattle, they being liable to be given away for the enjoyment of the donee.⁶

¹ iv, 24, 4.

² vii, 86, 7.

³ x, 91, 2.

⁴ 56, 3.

⁵ i, 92, 8.

⁶ x, 62, 10.

These, then, are the different classes who were recognized within the pale of Aryan polity. The king and the royal household will be treated separately. But before that we should know something about the non-Aryans who are called *dasa* or *dasyu*. A series of questions naturally arises as to their historic position, the principal points of their difference from the Aryans, their organization and mode of life, their wealth, and their civilization.

Non-Aryans.

These aborigines have been repeatedly referred to in the Rig Veda either as *dasyu* or as *dasa*. There are other meanings of these two words, but we shall take only those passages where the words mean non-Aryans or aborigines. One reference in the Rig Veda alludes to the *dasyus* as contrasted with the Aryas.¹ Indra again attacks and slays with his thunderbolt the *dasyus* and the *simyus*.² That the *dasyus* and the *simyus* were not Aryans is certain, but the doubt remains whether *dasyus* and *simyus* refer to different classes among the aborigines. This cannot, at this distant date, be ascertained. The next passage³ on the point speaks of the thunderbolt armed with which Indra goes on destroying the cities of the *dasyus*, *dasi purah*. This reference to their cities is significant. This shows that the *dasyus* were not uncivilized altogether, and lived in organized bands settling on territories, perhaps of their own clearing. Even if *purah* be used for villages or hamlets, this proves the *dasyu's* civilized life. He was not living in caves, as is suggested by some from meagre references, which most probably describe his condition after his defeat at the hands of the Aryan.⁴ In the same book⁵ the Aswins are said to be destroying the *dasyu*. Again, Indra let open the light to the Arya by crushing Vritra, the spider-like son of Danu. The hymn⁶ goes on: the *dasyu* has been set aside. The next sloka⁷ honours those men who surpass all their rivals as the Aryas surpass the *dasyus*. From this

¹ i, 51, 8.

² i, 103, 3.

³ i, 117, 21.

⁴ i, 100, 18.

⁵ See later, Civilization of the Aborigines.

⁶ ii, 11, 18.

⁷ ii, 11, 19.

it is evident that the Aryans were in earnest competition with the *dasyus* in the struggle and were winning almost everywhere. The hymn is born of confidence when Indra is again praised for having destroyed the *dasyus*, thus protecting *aryam varnam*.¹ In a mood of sceptical distrust Rishi Bharadwaja questions the attributes and power of Indra, but only after reciting Indra's feat of having quickly humbled the *dasyus*.² Agni is called on to expel the *dasyus* from the dwelling.³ This may be a reference to an inroad by the non-Aryans into an Aryan settlement. The deity later on, in self-praise, recounts his exploits and says that he has not given the *nama* of the Aryas to the *dasyu*.⁴

The main difference between the *dasyu* and the Aryan must have been one of religion. In the early stage of a nation's growth, particularly of the Aryans, the religious notions pervade their whole being. Gods being thrust into every successful act as its cause, and the belief being universal that the performance of religious rites according to certain fixed unalterable rules only, would please the gods, the natural consequence is that the race continually fights against aliens even when there may not be any necessity for it. Caution is required that the rites, etc., are not contaminated by even an unconscious admixture of barbarian customs. The history of the Greeks⁵ and Romans⁶ abundantly proves this and there is no reason to suppose that things were otherwise in the case of the Indo-Aryans. In the Rig Veda the non-Aryans are repeatedly spoken of in derogation as to their religious rites, which differed from the Aryans. Thus the *dasyus* are called *a-vrata*, i.e., without ordinances (or religious rites), and the prayer is to compel them to submit to the performer of sacrifices (the Aryan).⁷ The *a-vrata dasyu* is in another passage⁸ wanted to be consumed by the deity, as a wooden vessel is burnt by fire. The triumphant worshipper of the

¹ iii, 34, 9. ² vi, 18, 3. ³ vii, 5, 6. ⁴ x, 49, 3.

⁵ Wachsmuth: *Historical Antiquities of the Greeks*.

⁶ Warde Fowler: *Religious Experience of the Roman People*.

⁷ i, 51, 8.

⁸ i, 175, 3.

deity seeks again to shame the *a-vrata*, having no observances.¹ The same note of triumph forms the strain of another verse.² The *dasyu* has been described elsewhere³ as impious, perhaps meaning without devotion, *a-brahmana*. A severe verse occurs in the Rig Veda⁴ in which the *dasyu* is called *a-yajyu* (without sacrifice), *mridhra-vach*, and other uncharitable names, and the main cause of offence on the part of the *dasyu* seems to be that he does not perform sacrifices after the Aryan method. *Parvata* is asked to hurl the *dasyu* down to the stern smiter,⁵ viz., death, the *dasyu* who follows other and strange rites, *anya vrata*, who is not a human being, or, it may mean, who is the enemy of man, *amanusham*, who does not offer sacrifices to the gods, *a-yajvan*, and finally who is not solicitous about the gods, *a-devayu*. The *dasyu* is also spoken of as *a-karman*, i.e., without religious rites.⁶

Some have cast doubts as to the historicity of the *dasyus*, they being only a mythological race. Although many of the above passages are liable to this interpretation, others admittedly are not so. They are described in one passage⁷ as *anas*, *anaso dasyun amrinah*. Sayanacharya explains *anasa* as *asya rahitam*, and *asya*, he says, stands for *sabdam*, so that the meaning would be voiceless, i.e., speaking a tongue not understood by the Aryans. The later use of the word *mlechchha* (root *mlechchh*, to speak rudely) with reference to barbarians would support this view. Sayana is a great authority but his meaning here seems to be somewhat far-fetched. The more natural meaning of Max Müller is noseless (*a-non*, *nasa-nose*), in contrast to the prominent nose of the Aryas. In any case, this verse read with the others cited above goes to prove that the *dasyu* is not merely a superhuman being of myth but a person having physical features, coming directly in contact with the Aryans as rivals and enemies, and capable of being destroyed by them.

Another word that has also been used in the same sense occurs more frequently in the Rig Veda. But this word has also been used to mean so many other things that the

¹ vi, 14, 3.² ix, 41, 2.³ iv, 16, 9.⁴ vii, 6, 3.⁵ viii, 70, 11.⁶ x, 22, 8.⁷ v, 29, 10.

unwary is apt to be confounded. We are not here concerned with the various uses of the term and so shall take up directly only those passages where *dasa* certainly means human beings. Indra, the subduer of all the formidable, the lord, conducts the *dasa* at his pleasure.¹ Indra again is said to have rendered human enemies, whether *dasa* or Arya, easy to be overcome.² This passage shows that the Aryas used to fight even among themselves, so that by this time they must have been well settled in the land to afford to have mutual warfare. The same idea is conveyed when Indra, the hero, is praised as having destroyed both classes of enemies, *dasa* and Arya.³ Again, the expression, *hato vritranyarya hato dasani*, must mean, in spite of the neuter gender used, Aryas and *dasas*, the interpretation being *aryaih* and *dasaih kritani*, i.e., things done by them severally.⁴ Indra and Varuna are jointly invoked to destroy the gods' enemies, whether *dasas* or Aryas.⁵ The worshippers hope further that, with the aid of Indra, they may overcome and destroy in battle all those who propose to assail them, whether they be *dasas*, Aryas, or enemies of the gods.⁶ Agni is praised for having defeated the strong men, *dasas* and Vritras, like a resolute warrior overcoming those who are desirous of battle.⁷ With Manyu as an ally the worshippers express their confidence of overcoming the *dasa* and the Arya.⁸

The non-Aryans possessed cities or forts (*purah* may be interpreted either way). Indra is said to have gone on destroying the *dasi purah*.⁹ The word *purah* may have meant fort, for in one passage¹⁰ we find it described as *ayasih*, made of iron or, at least, of metal (*ayas* meaning metal). The combined effort of Indra and Agni is the subject of another verse¹¹ which goes to overthrow ninety strongholds (*purah*) ruled over by the *dasas*, *dasapatnih purah*. Indra's prowess is proclaimed again,¹² where, exhilarated by the soma juice, he demolishes the cities of the *dasas*. In one passage¹³ the expression *dasir visah* has

¹ v, 34, 6.² vi, 22, 10.³ vi, 33, 3.⁴ vi, 60, 6.⁵ vii, 83, 1.⁶ x, 38, 3.⁷ x, 69, 6.⁸ x, 83, 1.⁹ i, 103, 3.¹⁰ ii, 20, 8.¹¹ iii, 12, 6.¹² iv, 32, 10.¹³ ii, 11, 4.

led to the supposition that the non-Aryans also had their clan organization. We have already discussed it and have only to say that this and the succeeding references prove conclusively that whatever may be the meaning of *vis* in these passages, whether clan or people unrelated, the organization on this point was the same among the Aryas and the Anaryas, since the same word is used in the case of both. The expression, *viso dasirakrinoraprashastah*,¹ is also similarly interpreted as meaning clan. *Visah* here has been usually translated by *prajah*, people or subjects. *Akrino* means *karmahinah*, i.e., without religious rites or functions. *Aprashastah* means *garhita*, i.e., vile. The expression is interpreted by earlier foreign authorities as referring to servile classes, slaves, rather than free non-Aryans. But as the slaves were only those non-Aryans who had been reduced in war, the expression should also be equally applicable to the social organization of the non-slave *dasas*, even if in this particular passage the slaves only are meant. Here also the word *vis* has been interpreted as standing for clan. In a third passage ² *viswa abhiyujō vishuchir aryaya visho ava tarirdasih*, explained by Sayanacharya as *vishuchir sarvatra vartamanah*, would show that the Aryas were surrounded on all hands by the non-Aryans. Thus here *dasa* cannot be rendered as the servile classes, as is done by Wilson and Colebrooke. The usual fight over *vis* is found here as well.

Another distinguishing feature of the non-Aryans seems to be their black skin, *krishna tvach*. Indra punishes the aggressors by tearing off the black skin.³ This seems to refer to flaying alive. The theory of black skin as a distinguishing feature is not vitiated by connecting with this passage, as has been done by some, the legendary Asura named Krishna, the black, advancing with ten thousand followers to the banks of the Ansumati river, where he is said to have committed fearful devastation until Indra, with the Maruts, was sent against him by Brihaspati, when he was defeated by Indra, and his skin stripped. The black skin is also referred to in another passage of the Rig Veda.⁴

¹ iv, 28, 4.² vi, 25, 2.³ i, 130, 8.⁴ ix, 41, 1.

From the above description of the aborigines we can fairly expect that a people with such organizations, with cities or forts, knowing the use of iron or metal (*ayas*), should be prosperous materially. There are in fact some references to their wealth, and these, though few in number, are scattered throughout the whole of the Rig Veda. Mention ¹ of their wealth is made when the deity is asked to slay every one of them and bestow upon the worshippers the wealth belonging to them, so that here the amount of wealth, whatever it might consist of, is coveted by the Aryas. If, as we have reason to believe, the condition of the Aryans at this time was one of material prosperity (see later, Agriculture, Arts and Crafts), we are bound to say that the wealth of the non-Aryans also must have been very great, otherwise the worshippers could have asked for the destruction of the troublesome foes but would not have coveted their wealth. In another passage ² the deity is said to have carried off the wealth of one of the aboriginal chiefs, after demolishing his cities. Again, Indra is asked to cut off the foe as an old pruner cuts off the protruding branch of a creeper and humble the *dasa* so that the worshippers may divide his accumulated treasure.³ The passage is significant as a proof of the *dasa's* wealth. The prayer is not for the destruction of the *dasa*, but for his humiliation, so that palpably the object is his wealth, which is said to be accumulated. All this strongly suggests that the wealth of the *dasa* was very great.

So, we see that the aborigines of the Vedic age were also a progressive race or a combination of many races, that the contest with the Aryas was a severe one, and that they possessed wealth and had cities or forts, in one case spoken of as made of *ayas*. But there are certain other passages which prove that the non-Aryans were dwellers of mountain caves, etc., so that their civilization cannot be said to have advanced much. Here clearly there is a conflict between two sets of evidences. Two explanations seem justified, both of which may be true in different localities. There might have been different races among the non-Aryans themselves, some

¹ i, 176, 4.² iv, 30, 13.³ viii, 40, 6.

very advanced, others less so. The former might have been conquerors themselves and the rulers of the soil, as the Aryans were after supplanting them. The second explanation is that the dwellers in the caves were the civilized non-Aryans seeking refuge in natural fastnesses after their cities or habitats had been destroyed or occupied by the advancing Aryans. Both these seem to have been going on, otherwise the references to the wealth, power, and civilization of the non-Aryans discussed previously become inexplicable. The few passages, moreover, that occur in the Rig Veda in connection with the cave dwelling of *dasa*, all refer to one Sambara, a non-Aryan chief, and can be easily interpreted as a dislodged chief or son of a previously dislodged chief. In such a case, dwelling in a mountain would be natural. E.g., Indra discovered Sambara dwelling in the mountain for forty years.¹

Kingship.

We now pass on to the study of kingship in the period of the Rig Veda (*Rajan*). Prajapati prays to Indra to make him a king, *kuvid mam gopam karase janasya kuvid rajanam*.² It seems on the whole to be a historical fact that kingship was the normal polity of the early Aryans in India. The consolidation of the power of the king during the period of settlement is quite natural, as is shown in the history of the early Teutons, the post-Conquest English. The Bretwaldas, the so-called Heptarchy, also point to the same fact. The history of the Basileus in the earliest Greek settlements also substantially supports this view. The theoretical argument in favour of the growth of kingship, in supersession of the clan organizations, is very ably presented by Jenks.³ In India also we find that the same circumstances prevailed. The Aryans, in their march of conquest, had to meet, at every turn,⁴ powerful bands of non-Aryans equally versed in many of the arts of civilization known to the Aryans themselves. Continuous war followed, which must have led, as in the case of the early Teutons, to the

¹ ii, 12, 11; iv, 30, 14; vi, 26, 5.

² iii, 43, 5.

³ *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages*, Chapter iii.

⁴ vi, 25, 2.

growth of the royal power. In Continental Europe the king had to overcome, in England to assimilate, the clan organization with jarring interests and based on conjunction by birth rather than military efficiency. In India this obstacle did not exist, at any rate to the extent that it did in Europe, for we hear so little of clans, and of these many allusions are, on the whole, not certain. Although there are references to Aryans fighting Aryans,¹ yet we are not certain whether one clan of Aryans fought with another, or merely the people of one place fought against those of another. Nor can we even suggest, without launching ourselves into conjectural absurdities, that these wars were fought for the king either to consolidate or to disrupt his powers as conflicting with those of the clan units. Of clan also we have only the variedly interpreted *vis*, the war-cry *visam-visam*, and the word *gotra* which has hopelessly lost its original meaning. Be that what it may, we come across the word *Rajan*, which means the king or the person who rules. Whether the king was elected or hereditary is another moot point. In the later Samhita days hereditary kingship seems to have been the prevalent institution, reference being made to some lines of kings reigning for forty generations. Perhaps there was some sort of election as well, which might have been confined to the election of the king from the members of the royal family. The legend in the Nirukta² of Devapi and Shantanu, which forms the subject of one of the later hymns of the Rig Veda,³ refers to the practical deposition of the elder brother by the younger. But in this case the hereditary line was not disturbed, and in fact the two brothers were reconciled by the subsequent ill-luck of Shantanu, and Devapi's assumption of Brahmanic functions forms only an exception to the position of the Brahmana in religious ceremonies. But one passage in the Rig Veda⁴ is strongly suggestive. Varuna (who is merely the divine aspect of the king⁵) is said to be sustained by the waters of his creation. The hymn goes on : like subjects choosing a

¹ vi, 22, 2 ; vi, 33, 3 ; vi, 60, 6 ; vii, 83, 1 ; x, 38, 3.

² ii, 10. ³ x, 98. ⁴ x, 124, 8.

⁵ Macdonell : *Vedic Mythology*.

king, they, smitten with fear, fled from Vritra. The choice of a king by the people is clearly suggested. But the condition of free choice of the president of the United States of America or of the French Republic could not have existed. Otherwise why should they be smitten with fear? In any way, that choice of the king was known is certain; the uncertainty hangs about the means and the method of this election.

If we turn to the duty of the king, we find that this may be divided into two, viz., his duty in war and his duty in times of peace. In connection with the non-Aryans we have seen that frequent wars ensued between the Aryans and the non-Aryans.¹ The growth of an early king out of the people or out of the priest or out of the patriarch is undoubtedly due to war. Therefore, efficiency in war, in leading, fighting, organizing, or in propitiating the gods (in the case of the priest, of which there is very little probability), required that it must be shown and, in the beginning, maintained by personal prowess in the field. So that it is reasonable to assume that the chief function of the king in war was to lead the army. Specially is this probable in view of the fact that there was already the threefold differentiation of society into the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, and the Vis. In times of war the only possible function of the king could have been the leading of the military party. Besides these offensive wars against the non-Aryans and hostile Aryans, the king also undertook the defence against aggression. The prayer for being made the protector or rather a monarch of men is found in one passage in the Rig Veda, *kuvid mam gopam karase janasya kuvid rajanam*.²

In peace the king used to command the obedience of the people. He distributed his favours to the able men³ in his territory. An important verse in the Rig Veda⁴ implies that the king abides prosperous in his own abode; the earth bears fruit for him at all seasons; his subjects willingly pay homage to him. Sometimes this obedience or payment was forced⁵ (see later under Tribute). In the later Sutras we

¹ ii, 12, 11; iv, 26, 3; vi, 26, 5; vi, 33, 4; vii, 18; vii, 33; vii, 83, etc.

² iii, 43, 5. ³ i, 67, 1. ⁴ iv, 50, 8. ⁵ vii, 6, 5; ix, 7, 5.

find reference to the function of the king as civil judge, but in the Rig Veda there is no such mention. But his function as a criminal judge is hinted in some passages. Varuna, the personified god representing king, has spies for the determination of what is true and what is false.¹ Those who perform good deeds are favoured, thus receiving recompense for their acts.² The passage is obscure, but considering the state of society we may well imagine that certain criminal jurisdiction must have attached itself to the king. The spies of Varuna are specifically enjoined to praise to their master the acts of the worshippers.³ Yama also speaks of the spies of gods who wander upon earth and never close their eyes.⁴ All these passages refer to the gods, either Varuna specially or to gods in general, but the analogy seems to be applicable to the government of the king. Later on, we shall have occasion to refer to the laws and their administration. The king's function also seems partly to supervise criminal administration.

The king seems to have lived in a well-built palace which must have had many elaborate arrangements. In one passage ⁵ it is said that sovereigns sit down in this substantial and elegant hall built with a thousand columns. Varuna again is said to have a vast comprehensive dwelling with a thousand doors.⁶ Frequent reference is made to the brilliant dress, perhaps of the king. A passage in the Rig Veda ⁷ speaks of the *gomatarah* (i.e., having for their mother cow, whence earth; meaning perhaps king) embellishing themselves with ornaments, shining resplendent with brilliant decorations. All those around the son of Chedi are spoken of as wearing cuirasses of leather.⁸ The Maruts when bedecked with various ornaments look handsome and are compared with kings.⁹ Lastly, the king is supposed to be the landowner, but of this there is no proof whatsoever in the Rig Veda, though ample evidence of it is found in later literature.

Another word, *svaraj*,¹⁰ also occurs in the Rig Veda, which

¹ iv, 4, 3; vi, 67, 5. ² vii, 61, 3. ³ vii, 87, 3. ⁴ x, 10, 8.

⁵ ii, 41, 5.

⁶ viii, 5, 38.

⁹ x, 78, 1.

⁷ vii, 88, 5.

⁸ i, 85, 3.

¹⁰ i, 36, 7; i, 51, 15; i, 61, 9.

may be interpreted as self-ruler or king. But it has in all cases been used in connection with the gods and does not seem to require more than this passing notice. *Viraja* seems to signify a title of royalty, but its metaphorical use throughout the Rig Veda¹ does not allow us to derive from it much useful knowledge about the king. The idea of monarch or sole ruler seems to be known in that age when the smaller kings among the Aryans were perhaps fighting among themselves. The fact that, even in idea, *ekaraja* could be conceived suggests the movement of political events towards a unity under the supervision of the king. In the Rig Veda,² in connection with the god Indra, the word is used only once. But we may profitably remember that even in the days of the so-called Heptarchy the English were without a name for the holder of kingship. Bretwalda did not convey that nor could *cynning* serve the purpose. This view of the importance of the word will be manifest when we understand that in the Rig Veda there has already been conceived the superior ruler, the sovereign, having power greater than that of the king. Rishi Prajapati refers in a hymn to the universal sovereign, *samrat*.³ The Sun again is called *samrat*, since he measures the three worlds.⁴ Indra is also said to hold this position in another hymn.⁵ Rishi Bharadwaja tells Indra that Abhyavartin, the son of Chayamana, is the opulent supreme sovereign, *samrat*, and has made presents to the Rishi.⁶ This reference is clearly to a king who, at least for the time, was the most powerful one and thus was entitled to the high name. The same use of it is also found in another verse of Sobhari⁷ where he and his people seek the alliance of Trasadasyu for his protection.

The king was indeed a prominent person with regal paraphernalia and not merely the first among men. It is not certain whether there was any body of men like the Teutonic *comitatus*, the personal followers, who were attached to him in war, plunder, and in any new settlement. Considering the meagre references that we can expect from

¹ i, 188, 5; ix, 96, 18; x, 166, 1.

² viii, 37, 3.

³ iii, 55, 7.

⁴ iii, 56, 5.

⁵ iv, 21, 1.

⁶ vi, 27, 8.

⁷ viii, 19, 32.

the hymns of the Rig Veda about all such matters, we are bound to turn to the later period, and have our confirmation of any hint in the Rig Veda as to some institution, in the prevailing practice in the later Samhitas. Thus only can we form any idea as to the household organization of the king. Of course, after the king, his son must have been the most prominent man there, since either he was recognized as a future king or, if the system of election was prevalent, he was one of the best candidates for kingship. He was called *raja-putra*.¹ To the people as also to the other members of the royal household, he was an object of veneration ; and going about like a prince was different from going about like an ordinary man. It is uncertain whether he used to be surrounded by a body of retainers like his royal father, but in dress and personal bearing it is only reasonable to presume that he followed the king.

Nobility.

Among the people who formed the personal attendants of the king, men of high qualities and probably of high birth formed the majority. Though not exactly like the *comitatus*, still these formed a sort of united body following the king, as leaders perhaps in times of war. Most probably they were the associates of the king in peace as well. They must all have been of the Kshatriya caste, most probably of the royal family, and at all times must have formed a distinct body of men and described by the word *rajan*, which otherwise means the king in the Rig Veda. Indeed, this must have been the class which was in the mind of Rishi Narayana when in his famous Purushasukta he spoke of Rajanya as a class coming out of the arms of Purusha.² The deity Brahmanaspati is again asked in an earlier verse to concentrate his strength and slay foes, being associated with the regal attendants.³ The high position of the *rajan* is evident from Rishi Kutsa's hymn,⁴ where the adorable Indra and Agni are said to delight either in his own house or in that of a Brahmana or in that of a *rajan*, *yad*

¹ x, 40, 3.

² x, 90, 12.

³ i, 40, 8.

⁴ i, 108, 7.

Brahmani Rajani va. Later on, in the Rig Veda the descendant of the great patriarch Angirasa, in his invocation to Indra, says that the worshippers, i.e., the chiefs, may acquire riches.¹ Then again the medicinal plants or herbs are said to congregate for the extirpation of diseases, etc., as the princes of the ruling house assemble in the field of battle.² Here the word is used in the plural and, from the comparison made with the plants, seems to indicate the equality of their position. From this the attempt has been made to prove that in some cases, instead of the king, all the members of the royal family used to rule together and the comparison is made with the Teutonic settlement described by Tacitus³ where there is reference to such a case. Without denying the probability of such a fact, we consider it reasonable to state that the passing reference in one passage only does not warrant the presumption of such an institution. Zimmer seems to have projected his idea about the Teutonic polity into this verse and reads things in advance.

Retainers and Dependants.

Apart from these nobles attending the king there was a body of retainers and dependants who were of much lower position and perhaps of lower birth. The word *ibha* occurs several times in the Rig Veda.⁴ But the meaning of this word has been so widely interpreted that it would be unsafe to put much reliance on this alone. Sayana, for example, interprets it to mean 'elephant,' and he has been followed by some others. Yet proofs, besides this, of the king's retinue are not wanting in the Rig Veda. The word *vira* literally means strong and heroic man. This word means most probably in some passages⁵ the sturdy attendants of a king or a chief. Elsewhere⁶ also this interpretation may be put on it. Finally, the word is used in connection with Taranta,⁷ who is called a *vira*. But all these may mean merely a heroic person or persons, and the only thing in

¹ x, 42, 10.

² x, 97, 6.

³ *Annals*, ii, 88.

⁴ i, 84, 17; iv, 4, 1; ix, 57, 3.

⁵ i, 18, 4; i, 114, 8.

⁶ iv, 29, 2; v, 20, 4.

⁷ v, 61, 5.

favour of the interpretation is the later (post-Rig Veda) practice of having such attendants of the king.

Besides his retinue, the king assuredly had about him a body of dependants who are mentioned repeatedly in the Rig Veda. *Upasti*¹ means a servant who depends upon his master, but who is not exactly a slave. According to both the interpretations² of this passage *upasti* is a servant, but it is not exactly clear from the context whether the servant belonged usually to the king or to every man of importance. But even if he was so in the case of the latter, we can safely assert his existence in the case of the king, who must have possessed, in these matters of position and authority, what an ordinary non-royal man of importance did. The meaning of another word, *sti*, is very obscure, and it is said that it signifies dependants whose position is lower than that of the *vis*, *prajah* or the subjects, but better than that of the slaves. It occurs frequently in the Rig Veda,³ but its meaning in this connection seems to be at least indefinite. *Stipa* similarly has been interpreted to mean the attendant on the king's person, i.e., the guard of his body. But its use in connection with the gods⁴ seems to be incompatible with its dependent position.

Tribute.

We have seen previously that there was frequent warfare between the Aryans and the non-Aryans as well as among the Aryans themselves. We do not know anything about the treaties or other international relations, as we hear even in the early days of Egypt (e.g., in the reign of Thotmes III.), Babylonia, Assyria, etc.⁵ In most cases war continued till one party was totally crushed and became either slaves or subjects, or fled away to the hills or other places of natural protection, living like King Sambara.⁶ In most cases the terms of settlement were fixed on the cessation of hostilities. But there were other cases too when the humbled or the

¹ x, 97, 23.

² By Sayana and by Mahidhara.

³ vii, 19, 11; x, 34; x, 148, 4.

⁴ vii, 66, 3; x, 69, 4.

⁵ For ready reference, see Hall's *History of the Ancient East*. More authoritative ones are the books of Maspero, Breasted, etc.

⁶ ii, 12, 11; iv, 30, 14; vi, 26, 5.

weak party used to pay tribute to the strong or the victor. This might have been paid either for protection or for non-molestation on the part of the strong. The word *bali* has indeed been frequently used to signify offerings to gods.¹ But *balihr̥it* cannot but mean payment of tribute to the king. The mighty Agni first baffled the Asuras who were humbled and then made them tributaries (i.e., paying tributes) to Nahusha.² Most unequivocally, again, the dwellers of Yamuna and Tritsus got tribute of the heads of the horses from the Ajas, the Sighrus, and the Yakshas after Indra had killed Bheda in battle.³ All these are cases of payment of tribute from hostile tribes who by reduction in war were compelled to do so. But there seems to have been the practice of such payment from a friendly people or from one's own subjects even. There is one passage only in the Rig Veda,⁴ but it is very cogent proof of the fact. Indra is propitiated here to render the people payers of *bali*, *balihr̥it*.

Vispati.

Passing now to the other institutions of the Vedic polity, we meet first of all with *vispati*, a word of very various interpretation. Zimmer interprets it in one passage⁵ as the lord of the canton, in which case the kingdom must have been divided into well-organized units of smaller dimensions, having a sort of independence resembling perhaps the self-governing units of a modern state. But Zimmer's theory based on the mere mention of *vispati* seems to be at least indecisive. In another and less ambiguous use⁶ of the word, it is supposed either to mean the lord of the dwelling, in which case he must be taken as a subordinate of the king, if he had any political function, or to mean the king himself, if *vis* is translated by *prajah* or subjects. It seems that the proper interpretation of *vispati* in this connection cannot be ascertained unless it is clear whether the kingdom of a ruler was big or small. If it was very big, then these *vispatīs* must

¹ v, 1, 10; viii, 100, 9.

² vii, 6, 5.

³ vii, 18, 19.

⁴ x, 173, 6.

⁵ i, 37, 8.

⁶ i, 12, 2; i, 26, 7; i, 164, 1; ii, 1, 8; iii, 2, 10; iii, 40, 3; vii, 39, 2; ix, 108, 10; x, 4, 4; x, 135, 1.

have had political functions, and as such their position may be taken to have been more independent than mere governors of a province, with probably the same functions. This assumption should be reasonable in view of the fact that in later days ¹ we come across *satapati*, the lord of a hundred villages, who must have had primarily political functions as an officer.² Moreover, without such local units even in the Rig Veda period, there could not have been any unity within the realm of the king. But this may be negated by the suppositions (a) that the kingdoms were small, so that the king and the nobles were sufficient to carry on the government with perhaps the help of the *spashah* or the spy; or (b) that the government was not organized enough in those early days. But the condition of the people, as evidenced from their system of agriculture, arts and crafts, does not warrant the second supposition.

Vrajabati.

Even if such an organization was not necessary for carrying on the administration in times of peace, it was certainly necessary in times of war. And its prevalence in war shows that the army was not so small as to be led directly by the king and the nobles. This again would naturally presuppose a big state, which necessitated local governors or *vispatis*. However, in war or even perhaps in migration the *vrajabati* used to be attended by the *kulapas*.³ The *kulapas* were undoubtedly the heads of families, so that the heads of families used to go to war under the leadership of the *vrajabati*. The interpretation has been put by some according to which the *vrajabati* is identified with the *gramani*, so that the headman of the village was attended in war by the heads of families of the same village. Thus it would be the same as the division of the host according to the division of the curies in the Roman army of the early days. This interpretation seems to be very probable, as it is impossible to deny the significance of the connection between

¹ Maitrayani Samhita, iv, 14, 12; Taittiriya Brahmana, ii, 8, 4, 2.

² He had judicial functions as well.

³ x, § 179, 2.

the *vraja-pati* and the *kulapas*. And who else could be their leader except the *gramani* whom we find mentioned in the Rig Veda ?¹ The other interpretation, that it means merely a chieftain surrounded by the heads of families, is literally more correct. But the question arises, who could be their chieftain ? The proper explanation of this seems to be the identification of the *gramani* with the *vraja-pati* in times of war. It may be remembered, by the way, that the word *vraja-pati* also establishes its connection (in its etymological meaning) with the house, so that he was the headman somewhere, and the fact of his leading the *kulapas*, or the heads of families, offers the irresistible temptation to identify him with the leader of the clan consisting of families of the same stock. In such a case the *gramani* was, in ordinary times, the representative head of the clan. But we have already referred to this discussion among experts.

The Assembly.

The most important and typically Aryan institution was the Assembly. In all the three European branches of the Aryan race, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Teutons, the original political elements were the King, the Council, and the Assembly.² Out of these have grown the various complex institutions of the present day by the process of, what Herbert Spencer would call, differentiation and integration.³ The same three elements were prevalent among the Indo-Aryans. We have seen the king and we have also had occasion to know the Council whose members the *rajan*, nobles, must have been. But in this latter case there is no recorded evidence to prove that there used to be actual deliberations of these nobles with the king. Still it would not be unreasonable to presume that the king was influenced by the opinions of those who, by virtue of their birth and military skill, surrounded him in times of peace and war. In connection with the Assembly also we shall have occasion to notice the probability of such an oligarchical

¹ x, 62, 11 ; x, 107, 5.

² Freeman : *Comparative Politics* ; Sidgwick : *Development of European Polity*.

³ Herbert Spencer : *Principles of Sociology*, Vol. II, Pt. V, chs. 3-4.

body, which eventually superseded the assembly of the people.

Throughout the whole of the Rig Veda, from the earliest Mandala down to the latest, we find very frequent references to words meaning Assembly. We shall take each of these words separately and try to discover the exact institution that was meant by its use. *Vidatha* is an important word, as it occurs so many times in the Rig Veda.¹ In all these passages the word seems to signify order, not actual assemblies. These help us only so far as we attempt to argue by analogy by referring to the etymological meaning; and we must not be unconscious about its uncertainty as a word positively standing for an assembly. But besides these, the word *vidatha* has been used for Assembly in three different senses, viz., (i) Assembly for secular ends, (ii) Assembly for religious ends, and (iii) Assembly for war. Unfortunately no record of the procedure or the transactions of the Assembly is found in the Rig Veda, but the scant references in quite a large number of verses² scattered throughout the Rig Veda confirm the existence of such institutions for secular purposes. The business of administration in those days was not an elaborate affair, and we cannot expect that the king, with such limited duties, would be performing many public acts requiring the sanction of the people. Perhaps those matters only were brought before the Assembly which required the sanction or approval of the people, because these were not already sanctioned by custom. Such departure could not have been very many in number. But the frequent occurrence of the word for secular purposes suggests that these assemblies met even when there was no such departure. In such cases the function of the Assembly can be a matter of guess-work. Mere formal meetings would presuppose a superior organization and superior ideas of rules and methods to what we are justified to assert from a study of the Vedic civilization. Nor can it be confidently asserted that the

¹ i, 31, 6; i, 117, 25; iii, 1, 18; iii, 27, 7; iv, 38, 4; vi, 8, 1; x, 85, 26; x, 92, 2.

² ii, 1, 4; ii, 27, 12; ii, 27, 17; iii, 38, 5-6; v, 63, 2; vii, 66, 10; viii, 39, 1; x, 12, 7.

general body of the subjects was yet conversant, or was at all interested in being conversant, with the affairs of the State, beyond the protection of their hearth and fields.

The Assembly for religious purposes ¹ was evidently for worshipping the deity, and in this respect it is possible to say that it used to meet very regularly.²

There are a few references to the *vidatha* for purposes of war.³ The Maruts, for example, are said to sport in the Assembly ⁴ which evidently met for the demolition of the intruders or invaders. Again, the Maruts are found propitiated in a *vidatha* evidently assembled to make preparations for war.⁵

In one passage in the Rig Veda ⁶ we find the word *samgati* used for an Assembly where Indra, Vayu, and Brihaspati are invoked to join and thus be favourable.

Sabha is another important word, signifying 'Assembly, with which we often meet in the Rig Veda.'⁷ But sometimes it is difficult to ascertain whether it means the Assembly or the hall of Assembly. The tendency is to interpret it as Assembly, since we find *sabha-saha*,⁸ i.e., eminent in the Assembly. In one passage *sabha* has been used as the hall of dicing.⁹ But the general use of the word is to denote an Assembly for more serious matters. The actual deliberations must for ever remain unknown. Only glimpses here and there come to us from passing references. Sometimes they Assembled for general conversation about the welfare or use of cows,¹⁰ which were of course an important part of their wealth. Then, again, there was an Assembly for social intercourse, as when it is said ¹¹ that the well-born sacrificers met in assembly before the radiant fires (the fires here do not refer to the actual sacrifices). This passage has been further interpreted to limit the meaning of *sabha* to an assembly of the well-born or the oligarchs of ancient days, so that *sabha*, according to these authorities, meant more properly the Council of the Aryans as noticed in the European branches. This view of the meaning of *sabha* is perhaps supported by

¹ i, 60, 1; ii, 39, 1; iii, 1, 1. ² ii, 4, 8; iii, 56, 8.

³ v, 59, 2.

⁴ i, 166, 2.

⁵ i, 167, 6.

⁶ x, 141, 4.

⁷ vi, 28, 6;

vii, 4, 9; viii, 34, 6.

⁸ x, 71, 10.

⁹ x, 34, 6.

¹⁰ vi, 28, 6.

¹¹ vii, 1, 4.

the hymn¹ of Devatithi of the Kanwa family, where it is said that the devotees of Indra, being, by his grace, possessed of horses, of cars, of cattle, and of goodly form, ever supplied with high-class food and riches, entered an assembly. Further on, the Assembly of priests is called *sabha*.² Thus in these cases the constituents of the Assembly (*sabha*), so far as they have been explicitly mentioned, were all Brahmanas and Maghavans or rich patrons. So that the practically missing link of the Western Council is thus furnished from the Rig Veda. The word, of course, cannot be limited in all cases to such an oligarchic association, but in these passages it seems to be fair to assume that *sabha* was an assembly of the aristocratic elements, the priests and the nobles, with striking similarity to the earliest sitting in England of Lords, spiritual and temporal. Besides social intercourse and discussion about cows, etc., a third function is attributed to *sabha* from an obscure use of the word.³ It is said that the purpose was debate and verbal contest. Of these we have, of course, many, rather too many, in later ages, but their evidence in the Rig Veda is at least doubtful. It seems probable that sometimes the word used to mean the fire in the place or the hall of Assembly.⁴ The sons of Bharata sing of Agni as *sabhya*, and places it on the most frequented (i.e., where people assembled) banks of the Drishadvati, Apaya, and Sarswati rivers.⁵ Agni in this connection is also referred to as being placed in the midst (of the house, perhaps) where all could worship him.⁶

Samiti is another important word which occurs frequently in the Rig Veda. It is interpreted as the *Assembly of the Vedic tribe*. As such it would be of utmost importance. But unfortunately the social organization as depicted in the Rig Veda is not definite enough to warrant us to accept that meaning. In the Rig Veda it would be difficult to attempt to be positive in the assertion of this meaning. We would not at the same time deny the validity of such an interpretation; we are simply without sufficient materials about either the clan or the large co-ordination of clans, the

¹ viii, 4, 9.

⁴ v, 3, 11.

² x, 71, 10.

⁵ iii, 23, 4.

³ ii, 24, 13.

⁶ vii, 7, 5.

tribe. Some authorities, particularly Ludwig,¹ consider that the distinction between *sabha* and *samiti* was that the former was the Assembly of the Brahmanas and Maghavans,² whereas in the *samiti* the *vis*, *prajah* or people, assembled, and the Brahmanas and Maghavans were not excluded, but could sit at their option. According to this view, therefore, the threefold organization of the Aryans into the King, the Council, and the Assembly was the same in the East as it was in the West. But the passages are of much less information with regard to these nice distinctions than we would desire. The probability is that there was such a distinction as in the West, but we cannot definitely say that it actually existed in the period of the Rig Veda. It is of interest to note that in later ages such distinctions could be seen.

It seems that the king used to be present in the *samiti*, as this fact is alluded to in more than one passage in the Rig Veda.³ But it is not certain whether he used to deliberate there or what was the significance of his presence. His position must have commanded very great respect, and perhaps his explanation or request fell upon the assembly like command. No mention of dispute is anywhere found; and although we find it mentioned in the Rig Veda (not in connection with the *samiti*) that the king could be deposed,⁴ we cannot attribute that function to this Assembly.

On a previous occasion we have discussed whether the king was hereditary or whether he was elected. Here we may mention that some authorities, for example, Zimmer, attribute to the *samiti* the function of electing the king. They base their arguments on Rishi Dhruva's hymn, of which the deity is any inaugurated raja.⁵ The king is consecrated here and is asked to come amongst "us" and be steady and unvacillating. May all his subjects desire him for their king and may the kingdom never fall from him. The whole theory seems to be based upon the use of the first person plural, so that it is the *samiti*, or it is on behalf of the *samiti*, that the Rishi calls on the raja to be installed in

¹ Translation of the Rig Veda, 3, 253.

² vii, 1, 4; viii, 4, 9; x, 71, 10. ³ ix, 92, 6; x, 97, 6.

⁴ x, 173, 2.

⁵ x, 173; also see x, 174.

office. This point of view is, however, vitiated by the use of the first person singular in the first half of the verse where the Rishi consecrates him. The consecration was undoubtedly the work of the Purohita. Then, is it fair or reasonable to assume that the next words of welcome were uttered by or on behalf of the Assembly? Or, should these be taken as the utterances of the same person, using the plural in honour of the high position of the priest? Both are anomalies. If the fact is that the Purohita used the word in self-glory, why did he not do it with regard to the consecration? But it may be said in answer that the consecration was in fact a personal act in which he could not speak in the plural, whereas the king was the ruler of all persons and as such might be addressed by him in the plural. This is the only possible explanation, and this explanation goes in support of the opposite theory that the priest was speaking, consciously or unconsciously, on behalf of the Assembly. But even then it is very doubtful whether we are entitled to say, from this one sukta, that the king was elected by the *samiti*. After all, it is made to depend upon the peculiar idiom in the verse. But, considering the ceremony of consecration which evidently was public, and the set method in imitation of divine propitiation according to which the Purohita speaks, may we not be justified in holding that the assembled people, although they did not choose actually, yet, by that ceremony and recital of welcome, practically approved the succession of the king? This would accord well with the Teutonic system of approval in Assembly by shouts and beating of the spears against the shield.¹ But Zimmer's further attempt to see in the *samiti* the rule of oligarchy² seems to be unwarranted. Perhaps the choice of the king by the *comitatus* or by the *princeps* is what he intends to read in the Vedic polity.

It was recognized that mutual understanding and concord were necessary for the king's successes in battles. The *samiti* and the king should act harmoniously. The triumphant king says³: I seize upon your minds, your

¹ Referred to by both Cæsar and Tacitus.

² From ix, 92, 6; x, 97, 6.

³ x, 166, 4.

pious observances, your prowess in war. The hymn of Rishi Samvana, addressing the Assembly, says: Meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike.¹ Again, we find: Common be the prayer of this Assembly, common the acquirement, common the purpose, associated be the desire. I repeat for you a common prayer, I offer for you with a common libation.² Common be your intention, common be your hearts; common be your thoughts, so that there may be a thorough union among you.³ These are the last three slokas of the last sukta of the Rig Veda. Their vigour, earnestness, and directness must have appealed to the audience when this hymn was chanted in later days.

Police.

Turning now to the other parts of ancient state-craft we find very meagre and obscure references to the police system. The word *ugra* as it is used in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad⁴ means technically the man in authority, from which Max Müller rendered it into policeman. It occurs in the Rig Veda⁵ only once where perhaps it does not mean anything beyond the mighty or powerful man. Similarly the word *jivagribha*, literally seizing alive, is interpreted as the policeman.⁶ This meaning of the word in this passage would have been acceptable only as a confirmation of other evidence. But it does not, it seems, prove the existence of policeman by itself even if all allowance be made for the word *madhyamasi*, mediator or arbiter, used in the next verse.⁷ Moreover, considering the state of society where there was no law,⁸ and also considering the prevalence of the *wergeld*,⁹ such doubtful interpretations should be rejected.

Judicial Organization.

The judicial organization was very elaborate in the period of the Atharva Veda. In the Rig Veda we find only the

¹ x, 191, 2.

² x, 191, 3.

³ x, 191, 4.

⁴ iv, 3, 37-38.

⁵ vii, 38, 6.

⁶ x, 97, 11.

⁷ x, 97, 12.

⁸ See later under Law.

⁹ See later under Vairadaya.

madhyamasi,¹ who was perhaps a man of influence, to whom the disputing parties voluntarily, it seems, submitted their case for settlement. He was not an officer of the State, and most probably the parties were under no obligation to submit to him. According to some authorities the *sabha* used to perform some judicial functions, but the proceedings of this body are hopelessly beyond human knowledge. If it did perform that work it would very closely resemble the Greek *apella*.

Sapatha, in later Samhitas, means oath, from which it is clear that the practice of trial by oath existed in those days. The word, however, occurs in the Rig Veda only once, and there it means "curse."² It may have developed this meaning later on, but in the Rig Veda it does not mean anything else. On the other hand, there is one passage in the Rig Veda³ where, though the word *sapatha* is not used, yet a practice is described which, taken roundly, is the same thing as an oath. It runs thus: May I this day die if I am a spirit of ill, or if I have ever injured the life of any man. Therefore, as a part of the judicial organization of the time we cannot say that oath was systematically practised. But its use in the later days and its mention in the above passage make it probable that the system had its genesis in the Rig Veda period. This view will be in conformity with what we find later in connection with the administration of justice. The later society had the *gramyavadin* (village judge), the *abhiprasnin* (defendant), the *jnatri* (witness), as also *prasna* (pleading), *divya* (ordeal), and *sapatha* (oath) in judicial proceedings. We hear also of *vaira* in the Rig Veda,⁴ where *vairadaya* should literally mean that which should be paid in compensation. But its use as wergeld, as it was in later days, cannot be deduced from this one reference. In another passage⁵ the expression *satadaya* is used in connection with Raka. It cannot possibly mean anything but one whose wergeld is one hundred (cows). The word *daya*, in later Sanskrit, as perhaps in the Rig Veda, means "liability," and its technical use in *dharma sutras* or legal

¹ x, 97, 12.
² v, 61, 8.

³ x, 87, 15.

⁴ vii, 104, 15.

⁵ ii, 32, 4.

texts has made it "legal liability." From this it appears that wergeld was in practice in those early days. This view is corroborated by the organization of society without sufficient criminal jurisdiction either of the king or of any central authority. From the analogy of the Teutonic system¹ we know that wergeld prevailed as the successor of direct personal revenge, an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth. In Europe this wergeld was part of private revenge, brought about and thus limited by the interference of the king as the military leader, because such revenge always tended to weaken the strength of the clans joined together under the common leader. In later days it was one of the most important judicial functions of the king to assure the people that his might would compel the injured to accept the wer and the wrongdoer to pay it.² In fact, this uncertainty of the realization or acceptance of the wer was one of the greatest hindrances to social progress. At first the king was not powerful enough to take up the administration of justice except perhaps with regard to bootless crimes. He had necessarily to depend on the clan institutions. So we may say that wergeld as part of private revenge preceded the authority of the king at a time when he was powerful enough as a military leader to stop indiscriminate revenge and also substitute the wer or commutation for even blood revenge, but when he was not strong or developed enough to enforce or direct its actual currency. It was a period of transition when the king was only emerging into importance, and the host in arms was only appreciating, by actual concrete results on the battlefield, the disastrous effects of indiscriminate or blood revenge among themselves. The same conditions prevailed in the Indo-Aryan society during the period of the Rig Veda. From a study of the king and his household organization, the family and the Assemblies, we may be certain that he was growing in power. Military necessities during the course of the settlement in India required that the hands of the king should be strengthened as much as possible by eliminating the causes of internal

¹ Stubbs : *Constitutional History of England*, Vol. 1.

² Jenks : *Law and Politics in the Middle Ages*, ch. iv.

exhaustion through direct private revenge, if the race was to fight its way through an equally civilized non-Aryan settlement. But yet we do not find in the Rig Veda much trace of the criminal or civil jurisdiction of the king. The fact can only be explained by accepting that the king was not powerful enough or free enough to undertake all this, but yet could enforce, by way of military discipline, the abrogation of direct revenge, so that wergeld was still under private revenge. This explanation seems to be irresistible if we look to the later Samhita period when the wer was enforced by the king's courts. This is the natural result of the extension of the power and authority of the king. If our explanation is correct, we may see, even from only these two references,¹ that wer, as private revenge, limiting indiscriminate and blood revenge, did exist in the period of the Rig Veda, and that this wer came under the jurisdiction of the king, and was assimilated by the royal courts in later days even as was the case in Europe.²

Another practice of later days which is supposed to have been prevalent during the period of the Rig Veda is the ordeal, *divya*. But it seems that we cannot discover it in the Rig Veda, although the attempt has been made to interpret two passages³ as referring to this practice. Dirghatamas in the earlier text can hardly be construed in this light without doing violence to the language.

Law.

From the above it will be abundantly clear that the judicial organization had not grown much in the period of the Rig Veda. If we remember at the same time that theft and robbery were the only crimes mentioned and *madhyamasi* the only settlor of disputes, we shall not expect that *dharma*, i.e., law, developed to any great extent. Yet law or custom was recognized, as is evident from the various references that are found in the Rig Veda. We find *dharma* or law being upheld by Vishnu, the preserver.⁴ There were substantive duties enjoined by law. For example, the

¹ ii, 32, 4; v, 61, 8.

³ i, 158, 4; iii, 53, 22.

² Jenks, as cited above.

⁴ i, 22, 18.

priests were to dress Soma ox, *ukshanam prisnim apachanta*¹; the minor gods, Sadhyas, were to perform sacrifices in certain ways.² Intelligent people are asked in one hymn³ to offer to the powerful Vaiswanara precious things at holy rites, and it ends by saying: let no one violate the eternal law. In addressing Agni Rishi Kata speaks of its being first kindled according to law, *prathamadharma*.⁴ The self revolving (days), the ceremonies addressed to the gods, and the laws of man are mentioned as devoted to Indra.⁵ Again Agni, the divine purifier, is invoked as favouring the law of the worshippers.⁶ Mitra and Varuna are also mentioned as protecting *dharma* by their office.⁷ They are, on another occasion, called steady in the performance of their functions according to law.⁸ The word is perhaps used in the sense of civil law in connection with *madhyamasi*, the mediator.⁹

The exact nature of law at this time is obscure. That it meant some set rules or recognized customs, more or less widely known, is certain. Sir Henry Maine's admirable division of law in its earliest period of unconscious and spontaneous development is into (a) judgments, (b) customary law, and (c) code, i.e., authorized version of the law as embodied in some declaration by the State.¹⁰ Of isolated judgments based on the peculiar circumstances of each case, forming ultimately into parts of the law, we do not at all hear in the early ages. The recognition of *dharma* as set rules or practices, which were supposed to be protected by Vishnu and which bound even the gods and the priests, is a clear proof that the period of isolated themistes or even of Maine's dike was long outgrown by the Aryan society as it is found in the Rig Veda. This fact is important inasmuch as the conception of such order, method, and harmony as is involved in that of law is the heritage of a nation at a very late stage of its early history. Religion was, as it was bound to be, the predominant element, and that is why the term *dharma* is used so often in the sense of rules or practices

¹ i, 164, 43.⁴ iii, 17, 1.⁷ v, 63, 7.² i, 164, 50.⁵ iii, 60, 6.⁸ v, 72, 2.³ iii, 3, 1.⁶ v, 26, 7.⁹ x, 97, 12.¹⁰ *Ancient Law*, ch. i. See also *Early Law and Custom*.

directing religious rites and ceremonies. As punishment was not within the normal jurisdiction either of the king or of the priests, the ancient law usually laid down duties to be performed rather than the remedies or sanctions that would follow non-performance.

Debt.

But though the law with regard to civil matters seems to be so meagre or so scantily referred to, on the contrary civil relations do not appear to be so simple. Debts were frequently contracted and as frequently repaid. The divine Adityas are called the acquitters of the debts of the worshippers.¹ Sayana considers *rinani* in this connection to be real debts. Even if the word be metaphorically used, as is suggested by some, that would not vitiate the fact of the existence of debts in actual life. Varuna is propitiated in one hymn² and asked to discharge the debts (*rinani*) contracted by the worshipper and his progenitors. He wishes again to be independent of another for his livelihood. Just as in the modern times, the ancient people used to gamble, and at the dice betting seems to be the usual custom as it is at the cards to-day. Here also we find mention of the losing dicer being in debt. The gambler, ever in fear, anxious for wealth, is referred to as going by night to the dwellings of others (to steal).³ This passage is significant from another point of view. Why should the gambler be so much distressed and so much in fear, why should he be so desperate as to contemplate theft, unless there were effective means by which the debts could be realized? From the other slokas of the hymn, it is to be seen that he did not care for his wife, mother and his home, so that any harm to them would not have affected him much. The punishment must have been then corporal. This would support our theory about private revenge as the prevailing custom. He must pay or suffer punishment at the hands of the creditor. Perhaps he could be reduced to slavery, as seems to be probable from a verse where it is mentioned that the father, mother, and brothers of the debtor said that they did not know him

¹ ii, 27, 4.

² ii, 28, 9.

³ x, 34, 10.

(i.e., recognize him as their relative) and asked the creditor to take him away bound, wherever he might will.¹ In an obscure passage² perhaps the punishment is referred to as "held bound in ropes as the thief is held for stealing." But as in modern days punishment is not the only nor the principal incentive to the fulfilment of a contract, so also it seems to be the case in those days. The references to debts point to a practically universal practice; and frequent default would not be favourable to the subsequent contraction of debt. In fact, we have to assume that repayment of debts was as usual as they were contracted. In one hymn we actually find mention of such repayment, *rinani samni*, which means "to pay off a debt."³ Attempt has been made to read in this verse details as to the repayment of the principal or the interest. But that does not seem to be reasonable, the comparison to hearts and hoofs must be taken as merely metaphorical.

¹ x, 34, 4.

² vii, 86, 5.

³ viii, 47, 17.

CHAPTER VI.

AGRICULTURE.

WE have already dealt with the pastoral life of the Aryans of the Vedic Age and we have seen how they were as much pastoral as agricultural. A race that is settling down to a life of agriculture must remain, for long, primarily pastoral. Of course, pastoral life tallies more with the nomadic state than with a settled one, because in the nomadic stage of life, hunting and pasturage must form the mainstay of the people. That is why we find that the ancient Teutons, with very little known arts of agriculture, were proceeding along the Elbe, always halting by the side of a river or in a valley where they could get good pasture lands and where, probably, they could get as much fish and flesh as was necessary to maintain them. Otherwise, for purposes of protection we would expect them to travel by the natural fastnesses only. Before they settled down in Frisia they already knew the rudiments of agriculture. But agriculture by a nomadic tribe, living in one place for a few years, cannot develop much, and the more scientific and the more efficacious system of intensive culture of the soil and alternating cultivation with fallow cannot develop in such a state. The ever-shifting strip of the German *mark* land could not have been favourable to such progress. It is uncertain whether the predominant element in Frisia was pastoral or agricultural. But when they came to England by the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, they were already settling down to a life of agriculture which continued unabated even when the war of conquest was going on with the stubborn but retiring Welsh. Yet even now pastoral life was not the least important aspect of

their busy life, busy as conquerors, busy as agriculturists, and busy as settlers on an entirely new country. So, it need not surprise us if we find that the Indo-Aryans in the age of the Rig Veda were pastoral, but at the same time expert agriculturists, having individual ownership of land and not varying plots as in the case of the English invaders. They knew the arts of fertilizing the soil by artificial means, had some irrigation system, and used to manure their lands for the purpose of improving the natural qualities. The processes of sowing and reaping the crops, the threshing and the winnowing, as well as their means for measuring the corn, all testify to the amount of progress that they had achieved even in the time of the Rig Veda.

The Monsoon.

It will indeed be highly interesting as well as important to learn all these in detail as far as it is possible to know them from the Rig Veda. It is not exactly certain whether the people were acquainted with the Indian monsoon as such, which is even now the only crux on which a fruitful cultivation of the soil depends. But as they knew the division of the year into seasons and also the rains coming on to fertilize their soil, it might not have been impossible for them to look for the rains as the great benefactor of *krishi* or cultivation. There is a good number of hymns in the Rig Veda to the Maruts and in some of them it is possible to read the propitiation of the deities as the approaching south-west monsoon. Of course, we must not expect the scientific knowledge which, by the help of the meteorological department, we get to-day. Their knowledge about it was fundamentally the same as that of the ordinary Indian cultivator of the present day.

We find in the Rig Veda a passage¹ in which Agni and the Maruts are recognized as those who scatter the clouds and agitate the sea, and who spread through the sky, along with the rays of the sun, and, with their strength, agitate the ocean. Thus the people of the time were acquainted with the sea and the influence of the winds upon it. Rishi

¹i, 19, 7-8.

Kanwa again, addressing the same deities, speaks as if they were rising along the firmament. They are the agitators of heaven and earth.¹ The householder plants firm buttresses to protect his family and cattle.² The Maruts drive before them, in their course, the long, vast, uninjur-able, and rain-retaining clouds.³ The deities can even give animation to the clouds.⁴ They spread out the waters in their courses; they urge the lowing cattle to enter the water up to their knees (to drink).⁵ The lightning roars like a parent cow that bellows for its calf, and hence the rain is set free by the Maruts.⁶ They spread darkness over the day by water-bearing clouds and then inundate the earth.⁷ Thus do the Maruts delight their worshippers,⁸ perhaps by giving the rains which foster agriculture. Rishi Bhauma calls Parjanya ⁹ (perhaps Indra), the showerer, the bountiful, who impregnates the plants with rain. He, driving the clouds before him, makes manifest the messengers of rain; the roaring of the lion like cloud proclaims from afar that Parjanya overspreads the sky with rainy cloud. The plants spring up, the firmament dissolves; earth becomes fit for all creatures when Parjanya fertilizes the soil with showers. The deity is propitiated as one through whose functioning plants assume all kinds of forms, and hoofed cattle thrive. Send down, Maruts, the rain from heaven; come down, Parjanya, sprinkling water by means of the thundering cloud; thou who art the sender of rain and thus art the protector. Cry aloud over the earth and draw open the tight-fastened, downward-turned water-bag, and may the high and low places be made level. Raise on high the mighty sheath of rain, pour down its contents; let the rivers flow unimpeded, saturate with water both heaven and earth, and let there be abundant beverage for the kine. Finally, perhaps after it has rained sufficiently, the hymn goes on: Thou hast rained, now check well the rain; thou hast made the deserts capable of being crossed, thou hast given birth to plants for men's

¹ i, 37, 6.

² i, 37, 12.

³ i, 38, 9.

⁴ i, 37, 7.

⁵ i, 37, 10.

⁶ i, 64, 8.

⁷ i, 37, 11.

⁸ i, 38, 8.

⁹ v, 83.

enjoyment; verily thou hast obtained laudation from the people. This is the strain of all the hymns to the Maruts and of some verses devoted to some other deities. It is useless to quote all of them and we finish with the following one to Varuna.¹ Varuna waters earth, mid-air, and heaven when he pleases to send forth the milk of the cloud; thereupon the mountains clothe their summits with the rain-cloud and the heroes (Maruts), exulting in their strength, compel the clouds to relax.

It may appear to those unacquainted with the climatic conditions of the Punjab that this praise of the rains is in hyperbolic language. Of course, we do not exactly know if the climate of that part of India has undergone a reversal of what it was in the Vedic age. But the probability is that, though it may have changed much, yet it is not an altogether new thing. The rivers were wider and more fast flowing. The sea was perhaps nearer than it is now. The desert of Rajputana existed still, though it might have been less arid and less extensive than it is now. This latter fact will be evident from the rainfall described in the Rig Veda, whereas the modern monsoon can rarely bestow much water there, the water vapours being absorbed by the hot desert air and carried directly towards the Himalayas, without letting in much to the arid and irrigation-cultured Punjab. Making all these allowances, it seems that the climate of the Punjab as it was and its climate now must agree in fundamentals; for example, in the extremes of heat and cold, want of much water for cattle, etc. The present writer has had some experience of the modern Punjab, and he appreciates fully the sentiment of the Rig Veda when he recalls in mind the parched months of April, May, and June, and feels how delightfully agreeable must have been the advent of the rains in such a climate at a time when the modern system of extensive canal irrigation did not exist.

The Fields.

The organization and arrangement of fields are very

¹ v, 85, 4.

interesting and instructive, showing the holding of the cultivated lands and also the waste lands lying between them. Agriculture must have been universal in the period of the Rig Veda, as will be seen from the practice of intensive culture of the soil. There is almost a continuous reference to fields and cognate matters in the whole of the Rig Veda, showing the importance of agriculture. Various words have been used for the fields or cultivated lands, for waste lands, and for meadow lands. We shall take them up in turn to study the conditions of the agricultural life of the Aryans of the Rig Veda period.

Urvāra.

The word *urvāra* occurs repeatedly in the Rig Veda¹ in the sense of fertile land or plough land. The antiquity of this word may be traced to that early period of the Aryans, when they had not separated in different directions. In Greek the same word, practically in the same form, occurs for the same idea. *Aroura* stands there for what *urvāra* means in the Rig Veda. So that philology would establish the origin of cultivation of fertile lands, however crudely it might have been, in that distant original home of the Aryans. *Urvāra* in the Rig Veda means the land which is acquired for the purpose of cultivation. But whatever is acquired for cultivation may not be equally suitable for the purpose; some naturally pay for their culture, while others do not, so there must be the distinction between fertile and waste fields. In the Rig Veda *āpanasvati* means fertile whereas *artana* means waste fields.² There is some uncertainty as to whether these are subdivisions of *urvāra* lands or whether *urvāra* must be identified with *āpanasvati*. Whatever that may be, the point for us is that the people made the distinction, even in nomenclature, between culturable lands and waste lands. The fields were not held in communal ownership but each householder had his separate share which belonged to him definitely. This is proved, among others, by the

¹ i, 127, 6; iv, 41, 6; v, 33, 4; vi, 25, 4; x, 30, 3; x, 142, 3.

² i, 127, 6.

three prayers of Apala, daughter of Atri. When Indra, pleased with her, consented to grant her three boons, she asked him to cause three places to grow, viz., her father's bald head, his barren field, and her body.¹ The next verse practically repeats the same prayer. This fact of individual ownership is further confirmed by references to the winning of lands. After getting them through the favour of Heaven and Earth, Trasadasyu is said to have bestowed upon many the ancient gifts which include *urvarasam* and *kshetrasam*.² The word *uravarasa* is again used in connection with Indra who is called the owner of cultivated land.³ The deity Indra, in another passage,⁴ is called *urvarajit*; whatever may be the meaning of *jit*, it is clear that, whether by conquest or as *adhipati* (as Sayana explains it), he is the owner of the *urvara*. Rishi Sobhari calls Indra *urvarapati* or lord of corn land.⁵ The word is also used in one passage in connection with children,⁶ which may have some significance as to the nature of the authority that could be exercised on the lands. From this collation of facts found in the Rig Veda it is, we hope, fully proved that cultivated or plough lands were held in individual ownership.

Kshetra.

Kshetra is another word which means usually field. It seems to be of wider significance than *urvara*, which is corn land, i.e., cultivated field. But this distinction is not so certain and it would be advisable not to press it too far. Like *urvara*, *kshetra* was also subject to individual ownership.⁷ Rishsi Kavasha, in consoling Upamashravas on the death of his father, alludes to a pleasant field given to a beggar.⁸ Surely what could be given away to the beggar belonged to the giver; and gift to the beggar made the *kshetra* subject to his separate ownership. Further evidence is not wanting for the conclusive proof of this. The son of Svitra is said to have been protected by Indra

¹ viii, 91, 5.

⁴ ii, 21, 1.

² iv, 38, 1.

⁵ viii, 21, 3.

³ vi, 20, 1.

⁶ iv, 41, 6.

⁷ iii, 31, 15.

⁸ x, 33, 6.

when the former was fighting for his land (or, it may be, for the acquisition of land), *kshetrajesa*.¹ Trasadasyu, through the grace of Heaven and Earth, gained land, *kshetrasam*.² As a corroborative evidence we may accept that the expression *kshetrasya pati*,³ lord of the field, meaning the presiding god of the field, indicates that there was a separate deity for each field. But this is more or less uncertain and it may be so interpreted only in the light of the other passages cited above, establishing the fact of individual ownership of the *kshetra*.

Another important fact in connection with the *kshetra* is that it was very carefully measured, so that the lands of each might be easily distinguished. This looks like the modern cadastral survey. We do not exactly know what was the principle or what was the immediate object of it, but its reference in a passage⁴ in the Rig Veda may be safely taken as conclusive evidence of the existence of such measurement. But it must be remembered that there is no such reference with regard to the older and the more important division of land, *urvara*. The reason may be various. *Urvara* and *kshetra* may have been used for the same fields, so that what applied in one case applied as well for the other. Or, it may be that the *kshetra* was supposed to be more important than *urvara*, which may have been the relic of an age when agriculture was not sufficiently developed. But the more probable explanation seems to be that the distinction between *kshetra*, as the whole field, and *urvara*, as the cultivated portion only, was one of real vitality. *Kshetra* was the subject of private ownership as well as *urvara*. But naturally the *urvara* portion of a man would fall under, and be included in, his *kshetra* portion. And if the *kshetra* was carefully marked out and measured, *urvara* of one person was necessarily distinguished from that of another. This explanation of course assumes that the measurement was for the purpose of distinguishing the owners of lands rather than that of different kinds of land of the same owner. This assumption

¹ i, 33, 15.

² iv, 37, 1-2; vii, 35, 10; x, 66, 13.

³ iv, 38, 1.

⁴ i, 110, 5.

is quite reasonable if we remember that the property of the family was the property of the father, and that the family was never in the Vedic age a corporation jointly holding property (*see ante*, under Family Ownership); if so, what need was there to divide an individual's plough land and other lands by such careful measurement?

From the above discussion it must not be inferred that *kshetra* includes the waste land as well. Its frequent use¹ in connection with cultivated lands tends to imply that the system of fallow was known to the Aryans, and that all lands which were capable of cultivation or which were cleared and acquired for cultivation came under *kshetra*, whereas *urvara* would imply the actual plough land, that is, land under actual cultivation, thus excluding the fallow and the meadow land. On this point it is impossible to be certain, especially when the word *kshetra* is vaguely used in the sense of "place" in some passages in the Rig Veda.²

We also come across the waste land where cattle used to graze. *Khilya* is used in this sense in the Rig Veda. Agni or fire is propitiated so that he may not, as he has done in some cases, lay waste the sites of the tilled fields.³ But it is uncertain whether the waste lands were scattered between the cultivated lands as some think them to be, or whether they were, like the Teutonic waste lands, entirely separate and distinct from the cultivated lands. The use of the expression *abhinna khilye*⁴ is perplexing. Sayana takes *khilya* as waste land but gives its special meaning in this passage as *apratihatasthanam*, an unassailed or unassailable place, that is, *anyair gantumashakye sthale*, one which is unapproachable by others. This special meaning is attached to the word *khilya* because of the adjective *abhinna*, which is explained as *shatrubhirabhetavye*, that is, not to be breached by enemies. The expression would thus mean an inaccessible fortress. This is, of course, an unusual use of the word *khilya*.

¹ i, 100, 18; ix, 85, 4; ix, 91, 6.

² v, 2, 3; v, 45, 9; vi, 47, 20.

³ x, 142, 3. ⁴ vi, 28, 2.

Pharvara.

Another word, *pharvara*, of very uncertain meaning, occurs only once in the later portion of the Rig Veda.¹ It may mean a field in bloom, which, in connection with the context, will mean the overgrown pasture land. But Sayana explains it as filler, *parpharat* being taken as the intensive form of *pharvara*, derived from a root meaning to fill. Others again interpret it as sower. So we do not think that we should take it as the same thing as *khilya*.

Cultivation.

We now come to the actual cultivation of the soil. *Krishi* is the word used for ploughing, and the different forms of the root *kris*, to plough, are frequently used in the Rig Veda. Rishi Medhatithi alludes to a husbandman who repeatedly ploughs for *yava*.² Again, Indra is praised as one who causes men's desire to bud like *yava*.³ Later on, the gamester is advised to give up gambling and pursue agriculture, *krishi*.⁴ In another passage⁵ the ploughshare, furrowing the field, is said to provide food. Rishi Devamuni, in addressing Aranyani says that it is *akrishā vala*, that is, not agricultural.⁶ In more or less the same sense, the word occurs in various other passages of the Rig Veda.⁷ The deities, the Aswins, are said to cause the *yava* to be sown in the fields that have been prepared by the plough, or perhaps it means that the Aswins are concerned with the sowing of the grain by means of the plough.⁸ Thus the importance of agriculture as a means of livelihood is very clear from the Rig Veda. In fact, it was one of the most absorbing pre-occupations of the Vedic Aryans, as it is of the Indians to-day. This importance is specifically recognized in two at least of the passages cited above.⁹

¹ x, 106, 2.

² i, 23, 15.

³ i, 176, 2.

⁴ x, 34, 13.

⁵ x, 117, 7.

⁶ x, 146, 6.

⁷ iv, 57, 4; ix, 57, 8; viii, 20, 19; viii, 22, 6; x, 1, 14.

⁸ i, 117, 21.

⁹ x, 34, 13; x, 117, 17.

Implements of Agriculture.

Let us turn to the exact process of cultivation and the instruments used in connection with that. *Kinasa* was the name given to the ploughman.¹ He was thus differentiated from others who might have been doing other works in the field. Of course, these differences refer to the different functions only and do not prove that the division of labour was actually prevalent to that extent. The same person might have been doing various functions and so might be called *kinasa*, *pasupa*, etc. The *kinasa* used to cultivate land by means of the plough. *Stega* in the Rig Veda² has been doubtfully interpreted as the ploughshare, its meaning in the Yajur Veda Samhitas being distinctly something else.³ But *phala* certainly means ploughshare in the Rig Veda. The prayer is found thus: May the ploughshares break up the land happily.⁴ Again, the ploughshare *phala*, furrowing the field, provides food for the ploughman.⁵ The furrow itself was called *sita* and, in an agricultural age, must have been held in high veneration. Thus we see it personified and propitiated: Auspicious Sita, be present, we glorify thee: that thou mayest yield us abundant fruit.⁶ May Indra take hold of *sita*; may Pushan guide her; may she, well stored with water, yield it as milk, year after year.⁷ The whole plough was known, as it is known even now, by *langala*. In the Rig Veda we find in a hymn⁸: may the plough furrow happily. The plough was also called *sira*.⁹ Rishi Budha, perhaps on the advent of the rains, asks the people to harness the ploughs.¹⁰ The ploughs were drawn by ox, as they are nowadays.¹¹ At the time of harnessing the ploughs the yokes had to be put apart.¹² This perhaps shows that the cultivation was with the help of one ox rather than two. But the point is doubtful since in the later Samhitas there are copious references to the *sira*

¹ iv, 57, 8.

² x, 31, 9.

³ Taittiriya Samhita, v, 7, 11, 1; Vajasaneyi Samhita, xxv, 1.

⁴ iv, 57, 8.

⁵ x, 117, 7.

⁶ iv, 57, 6.

⁷ iv, 57, 7.

⁸ iv, 57, 4.

⁹ iv, 57, 4.

¹⁰ x, 101, 3.

¹¹ iv, 57, 4.

¹² x, 101, 4.

being drawn by six, eight, twelve, or even twenty-four oxen. When the ox at the plough slackened its work, the goad, *astrā*, was used to make it mindful of its work.¹ Pushan is asked to give the "service of that thy weapon which is the guide of cows, the director of cattle."² Pushan is also described as brandishing his loosened goad.³ Indra is called the wielder of goad, *astravin*.⁴ Once in the Rig Veda the sense of a goad is conveyed by the word *todā*.⁵ Its earlier meaning is uncertain, some authorities considering it to mean the prince as the wielder of the rod of punishment.⁶ But its later meaning is clear. It is also wielder of the goad but not the prince. It means the impeller,⁷ which may have been only a generalized expression of the act of goading in ploughing.

Irrigation and Manuring.

The ancient people did not depend on the natural water of the river and the rains alone. They enhanced the fertility of the soil, Ricardo's natural and indestructible powers of the soil, by resorting to artificial means. The arts of irrigation as well as of manure were known to them. The use of the word *khanitra*, shovel wherewith to dig, perhaps well, is mentioned in one passage.⁸ It is said that the use here is metaphorical. But metaphors can be conceived only when actual counterparts of them exist in fact. Even if we leave out this reference as of doubtful significance as a proof of irrigation, we are not in want of further evidence for our purpose. Elsewhere⁹ it is found: may the waters that are in the sky, or those that flow on the earth, those whose channels have been dug, etc. This is explained by Sayana as *khanitrama khamanena nivritah*, that is, formed or perhaps stopped by digging canals or reservoirs. In either case this is a clear proof of the practice of irrigation. In addition to the system of irrigation, the Vedic Aryans also used manures to fertilize the soil.

¹ iv, 57, 4.

⁴ x, 102, 8.

⁷ vi, 6, 6; vi, 12, 1-3.

² vi, 53, 9.

⁵ iv, 16, 11.

⁶ i, 176, 6.

³ vi, 58, 2.

⁸ i, 150, 1.

⁹ vii, 49, 2

In this connection excrement was utilized, and we find the Ribhus separating the *sakrit* or dung from other parts.¹

Reaping and Winnowing.

While engaged in agriculture the people must have been watching for the fruits of their labour most anxiously. The first green shoots must have gladdened their hearts. Thus green shoot or *tokman* was a joyous thing. We find its growth compared with the growth of Manu (Savarni).² As the corn grew up like glad hope they reaped it when ripe, and for this purpose the sickle most probably was in use. Considerable doubt has been expressed as to the right meaning of the word *srini*,³ but it is impossible to deny the existence of some such weapon for reaping the corn, especially when we know that the ancient people knew how to use metal (*ayas*). The corn was cut with the help of the sickle and piled up in bundles.⁴ Further, the wish is expressed that the grain may grow and fall ripe towards the sickle.⁵ The grain was separated in due order after it had been cut.⁶ This passage contains an expression which is highly suggestive. *Anupurvam viyuya* indicates a knowledge of the succession of crops which shows an important advance in agriculture. The grains, after they were cut, were put into bundles and thus the sheaves were thrown on the threshing floor. The *parśa* or sheaf on the *khala*, or threshing floor, is alluded to in a hymn to Indra Vaikuntha.⁷ Thus separated from the chaff, it was still coarse grain and as yet unfit for human consumption. At this stage the grain was called *saktu*,⁸ although in the later Samhitas it signified groat. The next process was to winnow it and thus separate the chaff from the grain. The word *titau* occurs in the Rig Veda for sieve or winnowing fan. Thus: the wise create speech through wisdom winnowing it as men winnow *yava* with a sieve.⁹ The winnower had a separate name for the function that he performed. He was called *dhanyakrit*.¹⁰ It is said that

¹ i, 161, 10.

⁴ viii, 78, 10.

⁷ x, 48, 7.

² x, 62, 8.

⁵ x, 101, 3.

⁸ x, 71, 2.

¹⁰ x, 94, 13.

³ i, 58, 4.

⁶ x, 131, 2.

⁹ x, 71, 2.

the word literally means purifier of *dhana* or corn. But another interpretation would make it producer of *dhana*, according to which it may mean either the winnower or the sower. In any case, this is a word used in connection with some agricultural function. For our special point it is not important to interpret this as winnower, for his existence is proved by the proof of winnowing and the sieve. After the grain had been separated from the straw and the chaff, it was stored up. In this connection the word *urdara* is differently interpreted.¹ Sayana renders it into granary, whereas others say that it means a measure for holding grain. For this meaning the word *sthivi* is used in the plural.² It may mean either a granary (Cowell) or a measure for the grain. *Sthivimant*³ is similarly explained as provided with *sthivi* or the measure. In view of the conflict of opinions, especially in view of the very peculiar and rather forced meaning assigned to the word by Sayana⁴ in his commentary on the first of the above two passages, it would be safe for us not to accept it as a positive proof either of store or of measure, although it must mean either of the two.

Thus we see that all the necessary processes were gone through by the people of the time. Their system of cultivation was neither the crude one of the nomadic Teuton nor that of the settled English in the island.⁵ They had advanced much further, though, in time, they were older than the English by at least twenty centuries. Not only was the whole process separated thus into parts, one after another, with all the nice details, but they had different names for each of these, which fact abundantly proves the superior culture and the more complex ideas attendant on it.

Besides agriculture the Aryans most probably had no other method of rearing up plants for purposes of their use. Some have tried to prove arboriculture, but this is doubtful. Some passages indeed lend colour to this theory.

¹ ii, 14, 11.

² x, 68, 3.

³ x, 27, 15.

⁴ He says that *sthivibhyah* is *kusidebhyah*, that is, usurers.

⁵ Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce, Early and Middle Ages*.

Indra is asked to give wealth adequate to the desires of men as a crook brings down the ripe fruit from a tree.¹ Similarly *sakha pakva*,² ripe while still attached to the branch of the tree, and *briksha pakva*,³ ripe while on the tree, occur in the Rig Veda. But these do not prove whether the fruits were gathered from the wild trees or from the trees reared by men. It would be safe to hold, without at the same time denying the existence of arboriculture, that these instances refer to the plucking of fruits of the trees which the people found around them, growing out of the munificent bounty of nature in a tropical climate.

Agricultural Products.

From the available materials in the Rig Veda it is difficult to find out the grains that were produced by agriculture. All the words used for grain have had some special meaning in the later period which was not the meaning in the Rig Veda. But one fact stands out as certain, that is, that the people of the time produced many kinds of grain. This is proved by the various names used. Probably it was an age during which they had just learnt the cultivation or use of some new products, but which, being recent, were not as yet given any special name. These names, then, were usually used for all kinds, though there might have been some attempts to specialize one for any particular grain. From the brief and indirect references in the Rig Veda, it is not possible, at this distant date, to reconstruct the moulding thought and nomenclature of the time. We shall, therefore, examine each of these words, refer them to the context where they occur, and try to learn the nature of the use to which each was put. This is indeed very disappointing, but we cannot help it for want of sufficient information.

First let us take the word *yava*. In later days its meaning was unambiguously barley. In fact this was one of the most important products of ancient agriculture; next came *vrihi* or rice. But *vrihi* does not occur in the Rig Veda and *yava* is used frequently, but it seems to be used

¹ iii, 45, 4.

² i, 8, 8.

³ iv, 20, 5.

as a general term for grain, that is, any agricultural product. A husbandman is said to plough the earth repeatedly for *yava*.¹ This repetition may either refer to its culture year after year or, more probably, it may refer to its cultivation more than once in the same year. The latter meaning seems to tally with the mention of the various seasons of the year. If this grain was produced twice in the year, it might probably have been barley, as that would stand two cultivations on the same soil in one year. But Indian soil is unusually productive and even now rice (*rabi* and *kharif*) is produced in some parts of India twice in one year. It is improbable that rice was meant here. It had a distinct and entirely separate name, *vrihi*, in the later *Samhitas*. If *yava* meant any special grain, it must have meant barley. *Yava* was one of the most nourishing kinds of food for the people. Agni protected the people and he nourished them as *yava* did.² In some passages *yava* seems to be some grain which was sown with the monsoon.³ The *adhvaryu* rejoices at the approach of the gods like *yava* at the fall of rain. With *yava* some preparations of cake were made which were sweet to eat.⁴ *Yava* also was a fodder for cattle, and it must have been very useful for the animals, since its effect on cattle is said to be the same as the sustenance given to man by Indra.⁵ We have taken here all those instances where *yava* may possibly have had some special meaning. But from the above it will be seen that we shall not be justified if we attempt to restrict it either to barley or to anything else. Besides these there are various other passages in the Rig Veda where the word *yava* occurs in the most general sense of grain.⁶

If we look at the other word, *dhana*, which occurs as frequently as *yava*, we find that the same difficulty arises as to the exact significance of the word, so that the people of the time either did not distinguish one kind of grain from another, or their distinction was not properly reflected in their nomenclature. The latter seems to be probable,

¹ i, 23, 15.

² i, 66, 2.

³ ii, 5, 6; v, 85, 3; viii, 22, 6.

⁴ viii, 2, 3.

⁵ viii, 63, 9.

⁶ i, 117, 21; i, 135, 8; i, 176, 2; ii, 14, 11; vii, 3, 4; viii, 78, 10.

since the distinct words used may be taken as indication of the different grains. *Dhana* in the Rig Veda is used in the plural, except when the adjectival form *dhanya* is used. In more recent Sanskrit it means rice, and from several passages in the Rig Veda this meaning may be attributed to the word. But the difficulty is that in the later Samhitas there is an entirely different word, *vrihi*, which stands for rice. Its so early mention in the later Samhitas at the same time makes it probable that rice was known even in the period of the Rig Veda. This becomes a plausible explanation if we consider the fact that in several references *dhana* performs many of the functions of rice. In offerings to Indra *dhana* was prepared into a food by being steeped into clarified butter.¹ *Dhana* prepared with butter is again mentioned in other places.² Cakes were made out of *dhana* and then they were baked.³ Here it seems that rice could not have been meant unless men pounded *dhana* and then made the cake. *Dhana* was considered a suitable food for the gods; for example, Indra was asked to take them, *sadrisiraddhi dhana*.⁴ *Dhana* was sometimes parched (*bhrij*) and then taken.⁵ This passage makes it probable that *dhana* meant rice. Rice can be parched either in the sun or in hot water or, for some other preparations, fried in hot sand, etc. The latter forms even now one of the most popular and cheap eatables of rural India. *Dhana* again was regularly mixed with soma juice in preparing the offerings at sacrifices.⁶ The adjectival form of *dhanya*, literally consisting of *dhana*, also occurs.⁷ The word *dhanyakrit*, literally purifier or producer of *dhana*, is found elsewhere⁸ as meaning either the winnower or the sower. *Saktu* in the Rig Veda,⁹ as has already been said, need not mean a separate grain, but merely the coarse grain before undergoing the process of winnowing.

Use of Cattle.

One other topic remains to be dealt with under agri-

¹ i, 16, 2.

² iii, 52, 5-6.

³ vi, 29, 4.

⁴ iii, 35, 3.

⁵ iv, 24, 7.

⁶ iii, 43, 4; iii, 52, 1; viii, 91, 2.

⁷ vi, 13, 4.

⁸ x, 94, 13.

⁹ x, 71, 2.

culture, which is equally covered by the pastoral aspect of an early people, viz., the use of cattle. There are various agricultural purposes for which cattle may be employed. So, we may conveniently make here a short study of the variety of animals and their respective uses in connection with an agricultural livelihood. Of cattle properly we have, under Village Community, dealt with the word *pasu*, and it remains only to be said here that it was a general term including all living beings, even man, although usually restricted to the lower animals. By far the most important among these were the ox, the bull, and the cow. The ox was employed for various purposes, and, owing to its sturdiness, it must have been considered as the most useful beast of burden. According to the different functions which a particular ox had to perform, it had different names. The draught oxen used for drawing the cart were called *anadvah*. Thus in one hymn Indra is asked to send the *anadvah* which may bring the cart laden with a particular kind of grass.¹ Metaphorically, the two shining orbs are said to be the *anadvah* of Surya when she went to her husband's house.² *Vaha* is also used to mean ox which performed the work of drawing, but the use of the word is confined to the drawing of the plough; thus *shunam vahah*, the oxen drawing happily or easily³; or, may the ploughman go happily with oxen, *vaha*.⁴ Bull, again, as distinguished from ox, was an animal useful to the people. It has been variously referred to in the Rig Veda. *Maryaka* occurs once.⁵ The bull was supposed to defend the herd of kine when endangered by any outside interference. As such it was called *vamsaga*.⁶ The whetting of the horns of the bull, *vamsaga*, was supposed to be done for the purpose of such defence.⁷ The wild rush of *vamsaga* into the forest is compared with that of Agni, which devastates everything that it comes across.⁸ In another place bull is meant by the word *Vrishabha*, as when its roaring is compared with that of Indra.⁹ The

¹ x, 59, 10.

⁴ iv, 57, 8.

⁷ i, 55, 1.

² x, 85, 10.

⁵ v, 2, 5.

⁸ i, 58, 4.

³ iv, 57, 4.

⁶ i, 7, 8.

⁹ i, 94, 10.

vigorous *vrishava*, curiously enough, are said to sanctify the heaven, as the milch cow the earth.¹ Bull-fights were known almost everywhere where bulls are to be found; thus its tenacity is referred to in a passage where Indra is said to fight with fierceness, like *Vrishabha* in close conflict.²

Usra, *usriya*, and *usrika* are also found in the Rig Veda to mean bull. *Usra* is used to denote its impetuosity and is apparently held in high esteem as the progenitor of the calves.³ *Usrika* may have something to do with sacrificial performances, or it may have been, by its use, held as good wealth, for it is said to be auspicious and as such compared with the auspices attending Brihaspati.⁴ The word *usriya* is also used in the same sense in the Rig Veda.⁵

The greatest variety of names occurs in connection with cow, which was certainly the most useful animal as giving milk and thus nourishing the young and the old. *Usrā*,⁶ *usriyā*,⁷ as feminines of *usra*, *usriya*, are used for cow. The word *go*, as meaning cow (sometimes ox as well), has already been seen in connection with Village Community. *Dhena* is also used to indicate the same species, although it abounds in the Rig Veda with various other meanings. But it is used sometimes to mean cow.⁸ A milch cow in particular is its meaning elsewhere.⁹ In plural, however, it generally stands for draughts of milk.¹⁰ But *dhenu* seems to be the proper word always used in the sense of milch cow. The *dhenu* is said to yield *savardugha*, that is, milk which tastes like ambrosia.¹¹ Cows long for their calves in the pasture or in the stalls.¹² *Sahavatsa dhenu*, that is, cow with her calf, is mentioned elsewhere.¹³ Its function of giving milk has been especially referred to in one passage.¹⁴ *Dhenu* and *vrisha* are contrasted again in the hymn to Agni.¹⁵ The barren cows are frequently alluded

¹ i, 160, 3.

² vi, 12, 4.

³ viii, 75, 8; viii, 96, 8; ix, 58, 2.

⁴ iii, 34, 3.

⁵ i, 194, 4.

⁶ vi, 190, 5.

⁷ v, 62, 2.

⁸ ii, 2, 2.

⁹ viii, 14, 3.

¹⁰ vi, 46, 4.

¹¹ v, 58, 6; ix, 74, 3.

¹² i, 153, 4; i, 180, 3; ii, 40, 2.

¹³ iii, 1, 9; iv, 58, 6.

¹⁴ i, 32, 9.

¹⁵ x, 5, 7.

to as proper offerings to the gods to be burnt with other animals. *Vasa*, as such, is mentioned in the Rig Veda.¹ *Starī* also stands for a barren cow, as when, for the sake of weary Shayu, the Aswins filled her bags with milk.² Cows also had different names according to their colour,³ and the red cow is especially mentioned as *rohini*.⁴ The young cow was called *grishthi*,⁵ and the calf was called *vatsa*.⁶ A special name for the eighteen-months-old ox is found to be *tryavi*.⁷ Such separate names for ox or cow of various ages are especially abundant in the later Samhitas.

All this classification of ox, bull, and cow proves one fact, that is, that the Vedic people were familiar with the use of cattle and that these were put to various uses. The rich vocabulary with separate nomenclature only shows the development of the race, as it is not possible to separate in mind, much less to give separate names to, the various functions performed by the same animal. Of course, it is only natural that a race which was pastoral for such a long time must be observant enough to make such distinctions. But it depends more upon the mental development than on the length of time, as is seen in the case of the early Teutons who, for a period two thousand years longer than that in the case of the Indo-Aryans, were pastoral and yet did not develop these linguistic distinctions.

The Aryans of the period of the Rig Veda were also familiar with ram and ewe (*mesha*, *meshi*). Rudra is said to bestow happiness on the ram and ewe.⁸ Elsewhere a hundred rams (*mesha*) are said to be cut up into pieces.⁹ Indra, again, is said to approach in the form of a ram.¹⁰ The Angirases, in another passage, are said to have cooked a ram in honour of the sacrifice to Indra.¹¹ It seems that the practice of castrating rams existed.¹² The wolf (*vrika*) was the great enemy of the sheep.¹³ The wool of the sheep, whence the expression, *urnavati*,¹⁴ woolly, was an important

¹ ii, 7, 5; x, 91, 14.

² x, 116, 22; x, 117, 20.

³ viii, 93, 13.

⁴ viii, 101, 13.

⁵ iv, 18, 10.

⁶ iii, 33, 3; iv, 18, 10; v, 30, 10; viii, 88, 1.

⁷ iii, 54, 14.

⁸ i, 43, 6.

⁹ i, 116, 16.

¹⁰ viii, 2, 40.

¹¹ x, 27, 17.

¹² i, 43, 6; i, 116, 16.

¹³ viii, 34, 3; viii, 66, 8.

¹⁴ viii, 67, 3.

raw material out of which they prepared their garments ¹ (see later under Arts and Crafts).

The goat, *aja* ² or *ajā*,³ also was a familiar animal whose milk was taken. It was useful as an important animal in the burial rites,⁴ the fat of the goat being used to wrap up the corpse.⁵ Goat and sheep are usually mentioned together in the Rig Veda.⁶

The ancient Aryans had special arrangements for the keeping of cattle which used to pasture in herds, *yutha*.⁷ The *pasupa* or herdsman was a separate person from the owner of cattle, and it seems that he was the paid servant of the owner.⁸ His function in the field, that is, outside the stall, was to protect cattle and keep them together. For that purpose he used to go frequently round the herd,⁹ so that they may not get scattered and thus lost. *Gopa* was also the herdsman, but its use in the Rig Veda being metaphorical, it should be interpreted merely as protector.¹⁰

¹ viii, 86, 11; ix, 8, 5; ix, 86, 47; ix, 107, 11.

² i, 162, 4.

³ viii, 70, 15.

⁴ x, 16, 4.

⁵ x, 16, 7.

⁶ x, 90, 10.

⁷ i, 10, 2; iv, 2, 18; v, 41, 19, etc.

⁸ i, 114, 9.

⁹ iv, 6, 4; x, 142, 2.

¹⁰ i, 164, 21; ii, 23, 6.

CHAPTER VII.

ARTS AND CRAFTS.

FROM our point of view this branch of Aryan achievement is very important. It is really surprising to find the ancient Aryans so highly developed as to possess such a variety of arts and crafts to supply their physical needs. Even in the earliest extant literature, the Rig Veda, they are found smelting metals, making ornaments out of them, using quite a large variety of domestic utensils, weaving clothes both ornamental and for ordinary wear, digging wells, building various kinds of houses and ships. It would be highly interesting to know all these arts and crafts in as much detail as is available from the text of the Rig Veda.

Metals.

The knowledge of the use of metals is evident from various references in the Rig Veda. One word, *ayas*, occurs very frequently.¹ The victim of the Aswamedha ceremony, the horse, is said to have manes of gold (*hiranyasringa*), his feet of *ayas*.² Again, *ayas* is referred to as being purified, which is compared to freeing from impurity by the praise of gods.³ A person, perhaps a warrior, is spoken of as whetting the edge of his *ayas*, *ayaso na dharam*.⁴ That *ayas* was a metal is certain, but what metal exactly it was seems to be a little doubtful. It must have been something different from gold, since it is separately mentioned above with gold itself. It may mean either bronze, or copper, or iron; or again it may have been used in the Rig Veda as a general term for these baser metals. From

¹ i, 57, 3.

² i, 163, 9.

³ iv, 2, 17.

⁴ vi, 3, 5.

the later Samhitas, where also this word occurs in the classification of different metals, it is probable that bronze was meant by *ayas*, since in this later period copper and iron are separately mentioned with *ayas*. In modern Sanskrit, however, *ayas* means iron. Thus the meaning of the word seems to have undergone a change since the time of the Rig Veda.

Besides *ayas*, gold is specifically mentioned as another metal of which the people of the time made extensive use. The word *chandra* is used in this sense in the Rig Veda.¹ Agni is said to be resplendent as gold, *chandramiva surucham*.² The interpretation of *chandra* as moon must be declared wrong as, according to Sayana, *chandra*, in the neuter, meant gold in the period of the Rig Veda. The more popular term for gold was *hiranya*, and as such it was recognized as valuable and used as ornaments. It gave much gratification to the vanity of man, as is the case with the use of gold everywhere. Rudra is said to gratify as gold does.³ Indra gave to the worshippers golden treasures among other things.⁴ The pure and golden lustre of Agni is referred to as shining like an ornament,⁵ which latter, therefore, must have been of gold. Indra, after defeating Vritra and other Asuras, gave the Aryas their cattle, their horses, and their gold.⁶ The use of gold naturally implies its extraction from ores. The fact is referred to in one passage which leaves no doubt as to its being known to the Aryans of that period. Dasras the Vandana fell into a well, or rather was cast into it by the Asuras. He was extricated by the Aswins. The position of Dasras has been compared to gold which is designed for embellishment and is like one sleeping on the lap of earth or like the sun disappearing into darkness.⁷ Gold naturally must have been the object of desire. Garga says that he has got ten lumps of gold from Divodasa.⁸ Further, to Indra the desire of men hastens seeking *yava*, cows, and gold.⁹ In the plural the word *hiranya* stands

¹ iii, 31, 5.² iii, 34, 9.³ i, 117, 5.⁴ ii, 2, 4.⁵ iv, 10, 6.⁶ vi, 47, 23.⁷ i, 43, 5.⁸ iv, 17, 11.⁹ viii, 78, 9.

for gold ornaments.¹ In the Aswamedha ceremony, the horse was covered with gold ornaments² before it was sacrificed. Rudra is described as shining with brilliant golden ornaments.³ The powerful Maruts embellished their persons like wealthy bridegrooms decorating themselves with golden ornaments.⁴

The use of gold and its use as ornaments naturally presuppose the art of smelting. Also, we know that *ayas* was transformed into the point of the arrow-shaft, spokes, ploughshare, etc. The exact process of the operation of smelting is not described anywhere in the Vedic literature, either in the Rig Veda or in the later Samhitas and Brahmanas. But its reference is unmistakable even in the Rig Veda. *Dhmatri* literally means blower. It occurs in the same passage⁵ in two forms, viz. *dhmāta* and *dhmātārī*. The former in the nominative case clearly means the smelter. The latter is somewhat less certain in its significance. Most probably it stands for *dhmātari* in the locative (*saptami karaṇa*), in which case it means the furnace where the metal was smelted. Another passage⁶ cited above in connection with *ayas* clearly refers to smelting. The smelter is elsewhere⁷ described as using the wings of birds, *parṇa sakunānam*, for the purpose of fanning the flame, that is, these formed the bellows of the smith. This verse is differently interpreted by some, for example, Wilson and Cowell, to mean that arrows were feathered to make them steady in flight. In another passage⁸ which is a little doubtful from this point of view the kettle or ewer is described as glowing, being prepared for the Soma sacrifice, *gharmashchit taptah pravrije ya asid ayasmayah*. But this glowing may also be interpreted as glowing while preparing the sacrificial food. An indirect proof of smelting is also furnished in a verse where the *drūna* is said to be *ayohatam*, that is, smitten with *ayas*, so that it must have had some thing of beaten *ayas*, even if it was not wholly made of *ayas*.⁹

¹ i, 122, 2.⁴ v, 60, 4.⁷ ix, 112, 2.² i, 162, 16.⁵ v, 9, 5.⁸ v, 30, 15.³ ii, 33, 9.⁶ iv, 2, 17.⁹ ix, 1, 2.

Ornaments.

In this connection it will be interesting to notice the various ornaments of gold and other metals which are mentioned in the Rig Veda. *Karnashobhana*, literally ornament for the ear, was a sort of ear-ring used by men. A prayer to Indra asks for this ornament for the worshippers.¹ The Viswadevas again are asked to give them a person decorated with golden ear-rings.² The same idea is perhaps conveyed when the word occurs in connection with the Maruts.³ *Kurira* was an ornament of the head which also perhaps was made of gold.⁴ They had anklets, armlets, and rings on the hands. *Khadi* as anklet occurs in one passage.⁵ The Maruts are said to have *khadi* on their shoulders⁶; this can only mean armlets, perhaps as a protection against the lance which the Maruts are usually supposed to bear on their shoulders. In the latter passage Sayana explains thus: *khadayo alankara visesah*. The word may have a reference either to the lance or to the rings on the hands when used in connection with the Maruts in another passage of the Rig Veda.⁷ The priests, again, at the sacrifice are described as *khadihasta*,⁸ that is, having *khadi* on their hands. This must be either bracelet or ring, most probably the former. Another form of the word, *khadin*, is used in the description of the Maruts⁹ and again in connection with Indra¹⁰; it seems to have some reference to a gold ornament. *Vrisakhadi* means a strong ring or bracelet and is usually said to be an ornament on the person of the Maruts.¹¹ *Nyocini* was another ornament most probably of gold and was worn by women at the time of their marriage. The word occurs in the Rig Veda in connection with the marriage of Surya.¹² People also used to wear necklaces made of gold. The word *nishka* is found in connection with Ushas,¹³ and Rudra

¹ viii, 78, 3.² i, 122, 14.³ i, 64, 10.⁴ x, 85, 8.⁵ v, 54, 11.⁶ i, 166, 9; vii, 56, 13.⁷ i, 168, 3.⁸ v, 58, 2; also *khadishu* in v, 53, 4.⁹ ii, 34, 2.¹⁰ x, 38, 1.¹¹ i, 64, 10.¹² x, 85, 6.¹³ viii, 47, 15.

is also said to wear *nishka*, which Sayana explains as *hara*. Agni is propitiated by men having necklaces of gold round their neck, *nishkagriva*.¹ One passage in the Rig Veda curiously refers to Kakshivat unhesitatingly accepting a hundred *nishkas*,² which therefore must have been used as currency, for why otherwise would a man have so many of them, which he could not possibly use for personal adornment? The expression, *sacha mana hiranyaya*,³ is used as one of the gifts from the gods. Its exact meaning is not definite; Sayana explains it as *mananiyani*, in which case they must be some ornaments. Another ornament, apparently more manly than the preceding one, was prevalent. *Rukma* denoted some ornament of gold shaped like the disk which was worn on the chest. The Maruts are said to have been wearing it and it is described as brilliant and conspicuous.⁴ The brightness of its gold must have made it the subject of comparison with the lovely radiance of Agni, shining upon all.⁵ People used to wear *rukma* along with other ornaments when they went to the sacrifice to praise the deity.⁶ Sometimes its place on the chest is specifically stated by saying *rukma-vakshas*.⁷ The brilliance of lustre that was in the *rukma* is sometimes referred to as *rukmin*.⁸

Ornaments, again, were not only of gold and *ayas* but also of jewels or *mani*. As is the case usually with the more primitive people, *mani* was worn as an amulet to drive away all sorts of evils that might have been influencing them with or without their knowledge. In one case even when the aborigines were thus protected they were dispersed and defeated by Indra.⁹ Here the exact expression is *hiranyamani*, which must mean gold and jewels. Jewels were also strung together and, thus being made into a *hara*, were worn round the neck. The expression *manigriva* suggests this practice in one passage.¹⁰

We may turn our attention now to the various things which the people used in their daily life. Of these, under

¹ v, 19, 3.² i, 126, 2.³ viii, 78, 2.⁴ i, 166, 10.⁵ iv, 10, 5; v, 56, 1.⁶ v, 53, 4.⁷ ii, 34, 2, 8; v, 55, 1; v, 57, 5.⁸ i, 66, 6; ix, 15, 5.⁹ i, 33, 8.¹⁰ i, 122, 14.

Agriculture we have already dealt with the implements which they used for cultivation. We have seen the *langala* or *sira* the plough, the *phala* or *stega* the ploughshare, *astra* or *toda* goad, *khanitra* for purposes of irrigation, *srini* the sickle, *titan* the winnow, *urdara* or *sthivi* the granary or measure. In short, all the implements that are ordinarily required for cultivation were known, though their manufacture might have been crude. But this at any rate is certain, that the different processes in agriculture were already recognized and that a sort of system and method was in evidence in the time of the Rig Veda.

Sacrificial Utensils.

The next item of study most conveniently consists of those things which were used for domestic requirements. Of these, again, the things connected with Soma sacrifice are more fully known than the others, since the Rig Veda consists of hymns only and refers to this sacrifice more than to anything else. *Amatra* was a vessel into which the soma juice was poured after it had been pressed with a stone between two boards.¹ The word is also used, perhaps meaning the same, where the libation of the gods is said to be offered to them out of the vessel.² Considering the popularity of the sacrifices and the proportion of the deity's grace according to the material offerings to it, it is only reasonable to presume that the vessel was a very large one. It is not mentioned whether it was made of wood or of metal. The former is probable since most of the Soma vessels were made of wood. For the same use another vessel was used perhaps of the same material. This was *chamu*.³ Thus the three purifying vessels are referred to in connection with the three daily sacrifices to the deity.⁴ Indra is again asked to drink whatever soma juice there is seen in the vessels and whatever there is in the bowls (*chamu*).⁵ Soma, after being cleansed by men's hands, reposes in the vessels, *chamushu*.⁶ Being effused by the priests the pure Soma rushes forth, as if to

¹ ii, 14, 1; vi, 42, 2.

² x, 29, 7.

³ iii, 48, 5; ix, 97, 46.

⁴ viii, 2, 8.

⁵ viii, 82, 7, 8.

⁶ ix, 20, 6.

battle, to alight vigorously upon the *chamu*.¹ It is again addressed as sitting on the *chamu*.² As the water flows out of the filter, so does Soma into the *chamu*.³ Soma is clothed, that is mixed, with the milk of cows as with newly washed robes⁴; the comparison is to the whiteness of the milk. Indra is asked at the sacrifice to pour water (i.e., himself) from the firmament into the *chamu*.⁵ The vigilant Soma sits down in the *chamu* after being purified, that is, filtered.⁶ When effused and collected by priests Soma is guided to the filter from where it alights on the *chamu* of Indra.⁷ Soma rejoices (i.e., brings rejoicings) amongst the gods, being purified in the *chamu*.⁸ Here *chamu* is used in the singular as also in another passage,⁹ where the oblation is said to have been poured into the mouth of Agni, like soma juice into the *chamu*. Practically the same meaning is conveyed by the word *kadru*.¹⁰ The drinking-vessel out of which the gods were supposed to have their fill of soma juice was called *chamasa*, that is, cup.¹¹ Reference is made to one *chamasa* being converted into four by Twashtri,¹² who, in the later Pauranic age, was identified with the carpenter of the gods. Elsewhere Agni is asked not to shake the *chamasa*, for it is dear to the gods, it is the drinking-cup of the gods, and in this the immortal gods delight.¹³ The *chamasa* was made out of wood, as, in a comparison, it is said that Brihaspati seized Vala without a shout, cutting him off like a *chamasa* from a tree.¹⁴ *Chamasa* seems to be the same thing as *dru*, a wooden vessel, very frequently referred to as such in the Rig Veda, but the usual use of the latter is any such vessel without, like *chamasa*, confining itself to a Soma vessel in particular.¹⁵ In some instances this special sense is attached to it.¹⁶ In one case the word *kosa*, which must have meant a vessel in general, has been used in the special sense of a Soma vessel¹⁷; it seems to denote a larger vessel

¹ ix, 62, 16.² ix, 92, 2.³ ix, 97, 37; ix, 99, 6.⁴ ix, 91, 15.⁵ i, 20, 6; i, 110, 3.⁶ i, 161, 1; v, 86, 3; viii, 66, 11.⁷ ix, 1, 2; ix, 65, 6; ix, 98, 2.⁸ ix, 93, 3.⁹ ix, 99, 8.¹⁰ viii, 45, 26.¹¹ x, 16, 8.¹² viii, 66, 11.¹³ ix, 98, 2.¹⁴ ix, 63, 2.¹⁵ ix, 97, 21.¹⁶ ix, 107, 18.¹⁷ viii, 82, 7; x, 96, 9.¹⁸ x, 68, 8.¹⁹ ix, 75, 3.

than usual. Out of all these different Soma vessels the juice was taken out with the help of a ladle or *juhm*.¹ Its shape was like a spoon but much larger in size. Just after being pressed between two boards, soma juice would naturally be mixed up with a quantity of soma plants also issuing out with it. This would have to be eliminated before the juice could be thought proper for drinking either by men or by the gods. So it had to be purified, and we have seen many references to this process of purification. The exact mechanism was something like a sieve through which it was made to pass. The sieve itself was straightened by being fastened on to the tops of pegs, and the juice, issuing out of the presses, flowed through it into the Soma vessel. *Pavitra* in the Rig Veda stands for a sieve. Thus the priests milk the soma plant and purify the sweet juices as they fall in drops through the *pavitra*.² The praisers of the deity pour forth to him the soma juice; they worship him in the streams falling from the *pavitra*.³ Again, it is said that the bright Soma is being kept for Agni, poured out upon the middle of the *pavitra*.⁴ In one obscure passage people are asked to bring the *uchchhishta*, that is, the remainder or leavings, of the soma juice upon the *pavitra*.⁵ It is not clear for what purpose it was filtered after the sacrifice, unless it was for the drinking of the men themselves. The sieve or *pavitra* itself was made of wool⁶ and not, as some have erroneously supposed, of *kusa* or other grass. The evidence on this point is abundant and particularly convincing. The rapid streams of the soma juice when being purified are collected to pass through the interstices of the fleece, *anvani meshyah*.⁷ Soma is said to have been strained through woollen filters, *avibhih*, literally with sheep.⁸ It is cleansed by sheep's hairs,⁹ the word used being *avayah*. In another passage soma juice is filtered and cleansed by sheep-skin, *avya* or *avaya tvach*.¹⁰ Soma is described as streaming on the water (according to Sayana) and the woollen sieve, *mesyah*.¹¹

¹ viii, 44, 5; x, 21, 3.² iii, 36, 7.³ viii, 33, 1.⁴ viii, 101, 9.⁵ i, 28, 9.⁶ ix, 16, 2.⁷ ix, 86, 47; ix, 107, 11.⁸ ii, 36, 1.⁹ ix, 86, 11; ix, 91, 2.¹⁰ ix, 69, 3; ix, 70, 7.¹¹ ix, 8, 5.

Again, Soma is purified in his woollen robe, *rupa avyaya*.¹ All these passages leave no room for any doubt, and we can positively say that the *pavitra* or sieve must have been made of the wool of sheep. It may, in some cases, mean goat's hair, as *avi* sometimes stands for goat as well. But in any case it was something manufactured out of the hair of either or both of these animals. Whether it was woven or plaited is, however, uncertain. From the use of the expression, *ati hvaramsi dhavati*,² it may be taken as plaited rather than woven; a woven sieve would not possibly allow the juice to pass so fast. The same expression, *havramsi*, is also used in another passage.³

The juice was pressed out of the soma plants; stones were used to crush them. *Upāra* as such occurs frequently in the Rig Veda.⁴ There are a few hymns⁵ from which it will be clear how the various stones, five in number, were so contrived as to crush the plants and bring out the juice. However, we are not much concerned with this beyond the contrivance itself. One element in this method of pounding was the *drishad* or the pounding stone.⁶ These separate name for it only shows its importance in that work of pounding. Besides this contrivance the people of the time seem to have developed another which was more like a mortar. Its special name as distinguished from the *upāra* or the *drishad* raises the question as such. *Dru*⁷ and *chamu*⁸ have also been used in passages where their meaning seems to be mortar for pounding the soma plant. The soma plant was always pressed between stones. But the domestic mortar, to which a few verses are addressed in the Rig Veda,⁹ was made of wood, since it was called *vanaspati* or lord of the forest. The reference to the soma juice does not here mean the public sacrifices. The mortar and pestle together have two verses devoted to them,¹⁰ from which it is clear that they were wooden. *Uluḥhala* in the Rig Veda stands for domestic mortar. A slight variation

¹ ix, 16, 6.² ix, 3, 2.³ ix, 63, 4.⁴ i, 79, 3.⁵ x, 94; x, 175.⁶ vii, 104, 22; viii, 72, 4.⁷ x, 101, 10.⁸ i, 29, 9; iv, 18, 3; v, 51, 4; viii, 4, 4; viii, 76, 10; ix, 46, 3

x, 24, 1.

⁹ i, 28, 5-6.¹⁰ i, 28, 7-8.

of the word is the modern Indian name of it even now, and the shape and construction are substantially the same.

Domestic Utensils.

Of other domestic things the utensils naturally become important. Meat was cooked in a cauldron, *ukhayah*, and *nikshanam* was the instrument by which they tested whether the cooking was properly done. *Asechanani* were the vessels in which the broth was distributed, *asechanani patrani yushna*. *Ushamanya* were vessels for confining the heat, and *pidhana* were the covers of the dishes, *charunam* as explained by Sayana. *Anka* or slips of cane, *vetasa-sakha*, were used as skewers to keep the meat in form while roasting, and *sunahavadanasadhana* were the implements of dissection, performing the function of knives.¹ In this special instance the flesh was of horse, but this was not so usual in the Vedic age as some other meat.

Patra was a drinking-vessel generally,² although its technical or special use as a vessel for the meat juice occurs in the Rig Veda.³ *Patra* seems to have been made of wood, as in one case there is a reference to its being burnt in the fire.⁴

Of the other domestic utensils, *drona* or a trough of wood was used for ordinary purposes, as also for holding soma juice. The word *kalasa* stands for a pot which was used both for domestic and for religious purposes. The discovery of a buried vessel full of gold is not a happy surprise in modern folklore only. It is told in one of the hymns of the Rig Veda.⁵ It seems probable that the *kalasa* was made either of gourd or of clay, but reference to either of these is not conclusive for want of sufficient information. The same sense is conveyed by *kumbha*,⁶ which was of a larger size. Cask or vase would be a more suitable rendering of the word. The birth of Agastya and Vasistha from a *kumbha* may be remembered in this connection.⁷ *Kumbha*

¹ i, 162, 13.

² i, 82, 4; i, 110, 5; i, 175, 1; ii, 37, 4; vi, 27, 6.

³ i, 162, 13.

⁴ i, 175, 3.

⁵ i, 117, 12.

⁶ i, 116, 7; i, 117, 6.

⁷ vii, 33, 13.

was made of clay and was easily broken. Thus Indra shattered the clouds like a new *kumbha*.¹

Inside the house the fireplace, *astri*, may mean either the oven where the cooking was done or the spot where the perpetual fire of the family stood. In all probability the two were identified, since, in those days, every food cooked for man was formally offered to the gods and then the food was taken as the remainder left by the gods. The practice is substantially the same among the more orthodox Hindus of to-day, especially the Vaishnavas and the Tantrics. *Pachana*, after its etymological meaning, stood for a cooking-vessel, but the only instance of it in the Rig Veda is in connection with the cooking of the food for horses.² The cauldron for the purpose of cooking the food of man was called *ukha*. It is not mentioned of what it was made. It must have been either of metal or of clay. The probability is that it was made of the latter, although its so general use in sacrificial as well as domestic cooking implies its durability. The boiling of the flesh of the horse in the *ukha* ³ has already been mentioned. The glowing *ukha* with its odorous contents is spoken of.⁴ Again, the *ukha* that is injured or struck, *prahata*, is said to be leaking, *yeshant sravanti*, and to scatter froth or foam.⁵ Another instrument for cooking or boiling was known as *charu*, kettle or ewer. Indra and Soma are asked to destroy the Rakshasas like the thing put into the *charu*.⁶ Soma is asked again to send him who is like a *charu* ⁷; the exact significance of the comparison is obscure. It is also mentioned by Indrani in her conversation with Indra.⁸ The preparation of the food in a *charu* is spoken of by Rishi Viswamitra in his hymn to Indra.⁹ According to one interpretation, which, however, differs both from that of Sayana and of Mahidhara, *pidhana* and *anka* in the Rig Veda¹⁰ are rendered as the lids and the hooks of the cauldron, in which case it would be a *charu*. Thus it could be hung on the fire by means of the hooks. This interpretation is

¹ x, 89, 7.² i, 162, 6.³ i, 162, 13.⁴ i, 162, 15.⁵ iii, 53, 22.⁶ viii, 104, 2.⁷ ix, 52, 3.⁸ x, 86, 18.⁹ x, 167, 4.¹⁰ i, 162, 13.

made probable by the use of the word *nikshanam*, which is interpreted in this connection not as the instrument to test the cooking, but as a spit or peg with which the kettle was hung. *Sula* occurs in the Rig Veda to mean a spit, and it is also said that some portion of the meat was falling off from it, which makes it very similar to the skewer.¹

Other Domestic Implements.

Among other things of domestic use that occur in the Rig Veda is the word *bhurij*, always used in the plural. This latter fact makes it probable that *bhurij* stood for scissors. But it is, by some, identified with *kshura* or razor. Both these words occur at the same time in one passage,² from which fact, as also from the use of *bhurij* always in the plural, it would be reasonable to interpret the two differently, rendering *bhurij* by scissors and *kshura* by razor. In the verse quoted, *bhurijor iva kshuram* is interpreted by some as sharpening of the razor on some strop, a grindstone in this case. The use of *kshura*, however, is very clear in the later Samhitas, and we should not be far from truth if we assume the meaning of *kshura* to be razor in the Rig Veda. This view is confirmed by the use of the word *vaptri* in the Rig Veda, which clearly means the shaver or barber. When the wind fans the flame, Agni is said to shave the earth as a barber shaves the beard.³

Needles were known and used. It seems to have been made of metal since the conception of cutting is attached to it. Indra is said to have performed three impossible feats, one of which was to cut the angles of the sacrificial post with a *vesi* or needle.⁴ *Suchi* also means needle, and the work of sewing is explicitly connected with it. In praising Raka, Rishi Gritsamada wishes that she may sew her work with a needle which will never break, *sivayatu apah suchyachchhidnyamanaya*.⁵

Rope or cord was used for various purposes, and separate names, practically meaning the same thing, existed, some-

¹ i, 162, 11.

² x, 142, 4.

³ viii, 4, 16.

⁴ vii, 18, 17.

⁵ ii, 32, 4.

times according to the peculiar use to which the rope was put. Thus the rope round the head of the horse while in the stall is denoted by *rasana* with *sirsanya*. *Rasana* is also the name for the straps by which a vehicle is drawn.¹ In these passages as well as in some others² the word may be translated either by traces or by reins. In one passage *rasana* is used in the general sense of rope, as when Varuna is asked to cast off all sin as if it were a *rasana*.³ *Dama* and *sandana* are names of ropes fastening respectively the horse's neck and feet.⁴ These are all special terms for the rope connected with the horse. *Varatra*, on the other hand, is used primarily in agricultural and domestic work. It was more like a thong or strap than rope. Thus: May the *varatra* bind happily or easily,⁵ which means here the traces of the plough.⁶ *Varatra* is used in speaking of the yoke being bound with the rope for its support.⁶ The oxen, again, were fastened to the yoke by means of *varatra*, as Indra did in one case.⁷ It was also used for drawing out water from the well, *avata*.⁸

Some commentators have read in the Rig Veda some sort of tube used by the Aryans. But the meaning of *surmi* as such in one passage is doubtful, *ajasraya surmya*.⁹ It is difficult to imagine how the youthful fire can shine before men through numerous tubes. The better and more probable rendering of Mahidhara is either kindled wood or red-hot iron post. The word *surmi* occurs again where its meaning may be a tube, *surmyam sushiram iva*.¹⁰ Sayana leaves the passage unexplained. Yaska renders it as a fair-flowing stream into an abyss. Ballantyne's explanation is "across whose palate the seven rivers keep flowing as fire penetrates and purifies a beautiful perforated iron image." From this the inference may be that it was a tube of iron. But knife as an instrument to dissect the sacrificial horse was surely used.¹¹ The same word, *svadhiti*, means axe for cutting wood in other passages.¹² Thus

¹ i, 163, 2. 5; x, 79, 7. ² iv, 1, 9; ix, 87, 1; x, 18, 14.

³ ii, 28, 5. ⁴ i, 162, 8. 16.

⁵ x, 60, 8.

⁶ x, 102, 8.

⁵ iv, 57, 4.

⁶ x, 101, 6.

⁹ vii, 1, 3.

¹⁰ viii, 69, 12.

¹¹ i, 162, 9. 18. 20.

¹² v, 7, 8; vii, 3, 9.

the Aswins are asked to give sharpness to the praises that are addressed to them, as people whet an axe upon a grindstone, *lashnotrena iva svadhitim*.¹ Human beings, by their praises, add lustre to Agni, as they add lustre to *svadhiti* by polishing it.² *Svadhiti* was used for cutting trees. To Vanaspati the wish is expressed that those posts (sacrificial *yupa*) which devout men have cut or which the *svadhiti* has trimmed may bestow wealth and progeny.³ Vanaspati is referred to as one whom the sharpened *svadhiti* has brought for great auspiciousness.⁴ Again, in another verse no *svadhiti* is at hand to cleave wood.⁵ Indra also slew Vritra as a *svadhiti* cuts down a tree.⁶ Axe was perhaps the meaning of the word *atka* ⁷ in some passages. Indra is said to have cut his foes in battles with *atka*.⁸ But it seems to mean a battle-axe rather than one used for domestic purposes.

The wickerwork basket for crockery was called *sunā*,⁹ but, according to Sayana, its meaning is knife or other instrument for dissecting the flesh when cooking it. *Akshu*, in one passage, seems to mean wickerwork, by means of which Dasras was perhaps dragged out of the well into which he was cast by the Asuras.¹⁰ Net was known, but it is doubtful whether the net was used for catching fish. It was like a trap to catch game. A hunter is said to arrest *padi* (perhaps a wandering animal) by his *mukshija*.¹¹

Madhukasa seems to mean honeywhip,¹² as when the Aswins are asked to invigorate the worshippers by means of *madhukasa*.¹³

House.

We come now to the house itself. *Gaya* is used frequently in the Rig Veda.¹⁴ It means the house together with all its contents, both animate and inanimate. Thus, Agni is asked to augment the *gaya* and its prosperity.¹⁵ Again, Agni is called the food and *gaya*, *svadha gayah*, that is,

¹ ii, 39, 7.

² viii, 102, 19.

³ vi, 33, 3.

¹⁰ i, 180, 5.

¹² i, 157, 4.

³ iii, 2, 10.

⁶ x, 89, 7.

⁹ i, 161, 10; i, 162, 13; x, 86, 18.

¹¹ i, 125, 2.

¹⁴ i, 74, 2.

⁵ iii, 8, 6.

⁴ iii, 8, 11.

⁷ x, 99, 9.

¹³ i, 22, 3.

¹⁵ v, 10, 3; v, 44, 7.

annam griham cha.¹ The word *pastya* is sometimes interpreted as house, but the expression, *ni shasada pastyasva*,² is perhaps more aptly rendered as *pastyasu daivishu prajasu*, that is, divine progeny. This would be more in keeping with the *samrajya* or sovereignty of Varuna. *Pastya* undoubtedly means house also.³ *Brahmanspati* is said to have some *pastya*, abounding with precious things.⁴ Life endowed with breath is said to repose steady in the midst of its proper abode.⁵ *Yajatam pastyanam* shows that *pastya* is house used here for the householder.⁶ A separate word for big mansions is found in some passages, which proves that the house of the rich was different from that of the ordinary folk. It was something like the modern country house with extensive lawns attached to it, including the stables and other sheds, the necessary paraphernalia of a rich man. *Harmya* in this sense is found in the Rig Veda.⁷ When people of the *harmya* worship Indra he is seen to exult greatly.⁸ That the *harmya* included the stables is found in one passage where the Maruts are compared to horses and are said to reside in the *harmya*. In the same verse *harmyesthak* must mean the people standing on the house. This may mean the high dignitaries on the roof of the house. This would make the house much better built than what we find ordinarily to have been. The mansion again was surrounded by a close fence or a wall shutting out the man "who sits, he who walks or he who sees us."¹⁰ But the dwelling itself would in a general sense be conveyed by *durona*,¹¹ as when it is said that the immortal being has sat down in the dwelling of mortals.¹² The same idea is conveyed by *nivesena*.¹³ *Vesman* seems to mean a wider thing, perhaps meaning domicile in the abstract or at least a settlement,¹⁴ as when by the grazing of the cow it was inferred that there was a *vesman*.¹⁵ Another word, *dama*, occurs for house proper, derived from *dam*, to

¹ vi, 2, 8. ² i, 25, 10. ³ iv, 1, 11; x, 46, 6. ⁴ i, 40, 7.

⁵ i, 164, 30. ⁶ vi, 49, 9; also in vii, 97, 5.

⁷ i, 166, 4; ix, 71, 4; x, 73, 10.

⁸ i, 121, 1.

⁹ vii, 56, 16.

¹⁰ vii, 55, 6.

¹¹ iii, 25, 5; iv, 13, 1.

¹² iii, 1, 18.

¹³ iv, 19, 9; vii, 19, 5.

¹⁴ x, 107, 10.

¹⁵ x, 146, 3.

control, that is, a place where one indisputably controls.¹ Its use only shows the power of the father of the family. But the most usual word for the house is *griha*, found in many passages of the Rig Veda, both in the singular and plural. It was the ordinary dwelling-house of the people. At night the cattle most probably lived in the *griha*.² In the house there was a sacrificial chamber in which the fire was kept continuously burning.³

The construction of the house is not clear from the Rig Veda. There was one pillar or post fixed firmly in the ground which supported the main beam or roof. Beyond this reference to the *upamit*⁴ we find nothing about *parimit*, etc., of the later Samhitas. *Sthuna* was perhaps another such pillar.⁵ The heaven is said to be stable like a well-constructed *sthuna*.⁶ The pillars of *ayas* in a chariot were also called *sthuna*.⁷ Some authorities say that the thatch was made of grass (*trina*), but the word has been otherwise rendered by Sayana and the other Indian authorities.⁸ In the house there was what was called the hall of sacrifice. It had many doors, each with a special appellation.⁹ The door was called *dur*.¹⁰ In connection with *griha* the more popular name for door was *dvar* or *dvāra*. Thus the bright *dvars* of the hall in the house are said to be set open.¹¹ The doorpost was called *darya*, as in Ghosha's hymn there is a prayer for reaching a husband's *durya* or door.¹² The door was fastened with a latch which was a strap called *syuman*.¹³ *Prostha* was either a bench or less probably the courtyard. The people used to lie on it and go to sleep.¹⁴ In the same passage the word *vahya* occurs which means a couch; perhaps it was in reality a litter, as Wilson renders it.¹⁵ Here also we find the word *talpa* used, which undoubtedly means the bed. It is the same in later Sanskrit. *Upabarhana* was the pillow, as *chitti* is called the pillow when Surya went to her husband.¹⁶

¹ i, 1, 8; i, 61, 9, etc.

² vii, 56, 16; x, 106, 5.

³ i, 69, 2.

⁴ i, 59, 1; iv, 5, 1.

⁵ viii, 17, 14.

⁶ v, 45, 2.

⁷ v, 62, 7.

⁸ i, 161, 1; i, 162, 8, 11; x, 102, 10.

⁹ i, 188, 5.

¹⁰ i, 113, 4; i, 121, 4; ii, 2, 7.

¹¹ i, 13, 6.

¹² x, 40, 12.

¹³ iii, 61, 4.

¹⁴ vii, 55, 8.

¹⁵ Wilson, Vol. IV, p. 123.

¹⁶ x, 85, 7.

Wells.

Outside the house, for domestic purposes, wells were extensively used. Sometimes natural fountains were called *avata*, but in most cases it meant a well artificially dug.¹ Indra is asked to drink the soma juice as a thirsty ox hastens to an *avata*.² The exact process is described elsewhere, where Indra is entreated to come down as a bucket is lowered into an *avata*.³ Soma juice flows copiously like a deep *avata* that supplies water.⁴ Indra looks down with favour upon his praisers as a thirsty man looks down on an *avata*.⁵ The praises converge towards Soma, as herds towards the *avata*.⁶ Rishi Budha says: set up the cattle trough, bind the straps to it; let us pour out the water of the *avata*, which is full of water, fit to be poured out, and not easily exhausted.⁷ Most probably a well was not provided in each house, but one or a few for the whole village. Thus the gathering at the well is mentioned.⁸ It must have been deep and well provided and inexhaustible, as is seen in a passage cited above, as also from another.⁹ There used to be a wooden trough by the side of the well called *ahava*, into which water was poured after it had been raised with a smaller vessel, *kosa*, which was dragged by means of a strap or *varatra*.¹⁰ The work of dragging was performed with the help of a stone wheel (*uchchachakra*). The process, it will be noticed, was exactly the same as it is to-day in Northern India, particularly in the Punjab, probably the place of its birth.

Tanning.

The people of the time of the Rig Veda also knew the use of leather. *Charman* as hide or skin is referred to in various places. In many places hide is meant,¹¹ referring to the covering of the new cow by the hide of the dead one to deceive the calf. But it was also used in the general

¹ i, 85, 10; i, 116, 22.

² iv, 17, 16.

³ x, 25, 4.

⁴ x, 101, 6.

⁵ iv, 50, 3.

⁶ x, 101, 5.

⁷ x, 101, 5-7.

⁸ i, 110, 8; i, 161, 7; iii, 60, 2.

⁹ i, 130, 2.

¹⁰ viii, 62, 6.

¹¹ i, 55, 8.

sense of skin.¹ Hide was used in the instrument to press the soma juice.² The rendering of *charman* by bag made of hide in x, 106, 10, as is done by Macdonell, is simply absurd. Here it means the milk-bag of the cow, the udder. The use of hide could have been possible only with the knowledge of the art of tanning. Tanning of hides, *mīla*, is mentioned in the Rig Veda,³ as also the tanner or *char-manna*.⁴ But the latter word is also interpreted otherwise as cuirasses of leather, practised in wearing leathern armour. The exact process of tanning cannot be gathered from the Rig Veda. In one passage it is mentioned that hide was moistened by water⁵; this was of course as a preliminary to tanning, but nothing else is said anywhere else. Besides *varatra*, straps, and the hide used in the pressing-board of Soma, leather bags also were prepared out of hides. The grog shop had leather bottles,⁶ as perhaps these were the only effective means to keep the wine in good condition. The Maruts are asked to draw open the tight-fastened downward-turned water-bag, so that the high and low places may be made level.⁷ A leather bag was also used for keeping curds, and as such it is said to be unbroken and without a defect.⁸ Soma juice was sometimes kept in a leather bag, and we have the Aswins invited to drink soma juice out of it.⁹ In one case it is called *dhmata*, that is, inflated, when the effect of dropsy is compared with it.¹⁰ Skins were also used as clothing, but this must have been at an age previous to the period of the Rig Veda, since by this time weaving was well known. The reference can only be to a custom which was a thing of the past. The Maruts are said to wear or have in their persons *ajina* or deer's skin.¹¹ The other reference is to a *muni*,¹² or one who has renounced the life of a householder; but here it is uncertain whether *mala* means skin or soiled garment, probably the latter. Both these allude to persons who are not ordinary or normal personalities and cannot be taken to represent the usual dress in society. Of the art of weaving we have ample

¹ iv, 13, 4.⁴ viii, 5, 38.⁷ v, 83, 7.¹⁰ vii, 89, 2.² x, 94, 9; x, 116, 4.⁵ i, 85, 5.⁸ vi, 48, 18.¹¹ i, 166, 10.³ viii, 55, 3.⁶ i, 191, 10.⁹ viii, 5, 19.¹² x, 136, 2.

evidence to show that the people were far too advanced to depend on *ajina* for daily clothing.

Wearing Materials.

The wearing material most popularly used was wool. *Vasas* is the most usual word used for clothing in general.¹ Before the sacrifice of the horse in the Aswamedha ceremony it was covered with a piece of *vasas*.² Pushan is said to be the weaver of the cloth (that is, the wool) of sheep.³ The wind raised the *vasas*, meaning the vesture, of Mudgalani.⁴ Among the givers of *dakshina* or present at the sacrifices is mentioned the giver of *vasas*.⁵ *Vasas* was, as already said, the general term for clothing, in which of course was included dress. But special words to denote the latter are not wanting. *Vasana* ordinarily means a dress, as Agni is said to clothe the earth with new dresses, derived from the rains.⁶ The more usual term for dress is *vastra*. Agni is asked to assume his clothes of light, *vastrani*.⁷ *Bhadra vastra* or auspicious raiment is spread for Vayu.⁸ The praise to Indra, the hymn itself, is said to be auspicious and clothed with white raiment, *bhadra vastrani arjuna vasana vach*.⁹ The word *atka* has also been sometimes used in the Rig Veda in the sense of garment.¹⁰ Some authorities interpret it as mantle rather than the garment itself. In an obscure passage¹¹ it is supposed to be said as woven, *vyuta*. The Maruts are described as wearing *hiranyan atkan*, that is, mantles adorned with gold.¹² *Vasas* has also been sometimes used as mantle, although its usual meaning is clothing in general; in such cases it is called *adhivasa*.¹³ The æsthetic taste must have grown with regard to dressing. *Atka* is sometimes spoken of as *surabhi*¹⁴ or well fitting, *vasano atkam surabhim*.¹⁵ The mantle seems to be a common dress of all, perhaps like the toga of the Romans. The deity Varuna wears one set with gold,

¹ i, 34, 1; i, 115, 4; viii, 3, 24.

² x, 26, 6.

³ i, 95, 7.

⁴ iii, 39, 2.

⁵ i, 122, 2.

⁶ x, 123, 7.

⁷ ix, 102, 2.

⁸ i, 26, 1.

⁹ iv, 18, 5; v, 55, 6, etc.

¹⁰ v, 55, 6.

¹¹ vi, 29, 3.

¹² i, 162, 16.

¹³ x, 107, 2.

¹⁴ i, 134, 4.

¹⁵ i, 160, 16; x, 5, 4.

bibhrad drapim hiranyayam.¹ Nasatyas stripped off, from the aged Chyavana, his entire skin as if it had been a *drapi*.² Savitri is said to put on *drapi*, *pishangam drapin pratimunchate*.³ Sayana, however, renders the expression by *hiranmayam kavacham achchhadayati pratyudayam*, so that *drapi* would mean a golden cuirass. The adorable, again, wear *drapi*,⁴ as also Pavamana.⁵

There was a great variety of dresses. Some would be worn ordinarily for all times, others again were reserved for special occasions, and were of a much better quality. Thus Soma is asked to bring *suvasanani* or handsome garments.⁶ Ushas puts on becoming attire like a wife desirous to please her husband.⁷ The sacrificial *yupa* is said to be clad well.⁸ *Jnana* or knowledge of the supreme Brahma is said to deliver her person to the devotee as a loving wife well attired presents herself to her husband.⁹ The bridal garment was a special one, and must have been appropriate to the joyous ceremony by its splendour and beauty. *Vadhuya* as such is referred to in one passage of the Rig Veda.¹⁰ Embroidery as an art was known. The exact method of such embroidery cannot be discovered, but reference to it is found in the Rig Veda. The dancing girl (*nritur*) used to wear embroidered garments, *pesansi*.¹¹ In the next verse Ushas is said to wear *pesas*. The border or skirt of a garment was called *sic*,¹² and the mother used to cover her child with it¹³ just as a modern mother in India does. In the Rig Veda itself we do not find any direct reference to washing or cleansing of clothes, as we do in the later Samhitas. We come across soiled or dirty garments as worn by the *munis*.¹⁴ Reference is also made to newly washed robes, when it is compared to clothing the soma juice with milk, thus making it whiter.¹⁵ Cleansing of garments is compared to Pushan's purifying all around by light and heat.¹⁶

Woollen garments are referred to as being worn by the people as well as by the gods. Pushan is said to be the

¹ i, 25, 13.² ix, 86, 14.³ i, 124, 7.⁴ x, 85, 34.⁵ x, 18, 11.⁶ i, 116, 10.⁷ ix, 100, 9.⁸ iii, 8, 4.⁹ i, 92, 4.¹⁰ x, 136, 2.¹¹ ix, 93, 3.¹² iv, 53, 2.¹³ ix, 97, 50.¹⁴ x, 71, 4.¹⁵ iii, 53, 2.¹⁶ x, 26, 6.

weaver of the cloth (the wool) of sheep.¹ The ewes, *avi*, of Gandhara were famous for their wool.² *Urnā parush-nim* occurs elsewhere.³ *Urna* means wool. The sheep is called *urnavati*, that is, woolly.⁴ The *barhis* are said to be soft as *urna*,⁵ as also the virgin earth.⁶ In all uses of the word *urna*, it must be remembered that goat's hair may have been included. But wool was certainly used, as is proved from the allusions to *avi* or sheep. *Samulya* again is understood by some as woollen garment.⁷

Weaving.

The art of weaving developed wonderfully well. The exact process is not described, but the special terms used in the text show the complications that were already attained in the weaving industry. The word *vaya* as weaver is found in the Rīg Veda.⁸ Pushan is called the weaver of wool.⁹ Weaver, perhaps, is also the meaning of *siri*.¹⁰ The weaver worked with the warp, the woof, and the shuttle. *Tantu*¹¹ means the warp, and was derived from the idea of stretching.¹² *Tantru* used with *siri* may also mean the same thing.¹³ *Otu* means the woof. Rishi Bharadwaja says: I understand not the threads of the warp, nor the threads of the woof, nor that cloth which those who are assiduous in united exertion weave; *naham tantum na vijānamyotum, na yam vāyanti samare atamanah*.¹⁴ Agni Vaiswanara is said in the next verse to understand the threads of the warp and of the woof. The shuttle, *tasara*, was used in weaving, and it is said that devotees have made the prayers serve as *tasara* for weaving.¹⁵ The web was spread by means of pegs, *mayukhaih*.¹⁶ The stretching of the web in this way is also mentioned in another passage.¹⁷ It will be seen from the original texts referred to above that the weaving industry must have been very common and widely known, so that it was the subject of

¹ x, 26, 6.

² iv, 22, 2; v, 52, 9.

³ x, 18, 10.

⁴ x, 26, 6.

⁵ x, 130, 2.

⁶ x, 130, 2.

⁷ viii, 56, 3.

⁸ x, 85, 29.

⁹ x, 71, 9.

¹⁰ x, 71, 9.

¹¹ vii, 99, 3.

¹² i, 126, 7.

¹³ v, 5, 4.

¹⁴ ii, 3, 6.

¹⁵ vi, 9, 2, 3.

¹⁶ vi, 9, 2.

¹⁷ x, 130, 2.

apt comparisons even in religious hymns in which they occur. Most probably each village had its separate weaver. The industry was not confined to each family, as in that case *vaya* and *siri* would be meaningless, whereas they are referred to as professions.

Dice.

The state of progress of the Vedic Aryans can also be understood from their pastimes. Gambling was one of the most popular recreations as it was one of the causes of ruin.¹ Dicing (*aksha*) was known in the Vedic age, and it continued to be a pastime even in the Epic age, when Yudisthira lost everything at the game. *Aksha* or dice was prepared from the *vibhidaka* nuts. Thus in one passage *bibhidaka* itself stands for gambling.² It is also used for dice.³ Being made of that particular nut it naturally took the same colour. So, the tawny (*babhru*) dice are said to rattle as they are thrown.⁴ The vivid picture of the ruinous condition in which the thoughtless gamester may be launched is so brilliantly drawn by Rishi Kavasha⁵ that we are tempted to consider gambling with dice as one of the most frequent pursuits. This supposition would naturally lead to the manufacture of dice out of the *bibhidaka* nut. But this need not have existed as a separate industry, for there could not have been any such large demand as to necessitate its existence in the village. Most probably there was some public-house to which people resorted for gambling, for the gamester is said to go to the gambling hall.⁶ Moreover, in one passage the creditor had to go to the house of the debtor, who had lost in gambling, to realize the debt, where his mother, father, and brothers disowned him.⁷ The lost man was apparently gambling outside the house. Gambling was the pastime not only of the ordinary people; it was largely the practice among the higher dignitaries. Even the king paid homage to the dice.⁸

¹ x, 34.

² vii, 86, 6.

³ x, 34, 1.

⁴ x, 34, 5.

⁵ x, 34.

⁶ x, 34, 6.

⁷ x, 34, 4.

⁸ x, 34, 8.

Navigation.

Navigation was known as early as in the period of the Rig Veda, though it was not so frequent on the sea. This is rather strange. Whatever may have been the exact original home of the Aryans, it never could have been near the sea or even near a large river. But in the Rig Veda we not only find the Aryans easily crossing the rivers of the Punjab, but they were also venturing out into the sea. From this two facts can be reasonably deduced. The first is that the Aryans must have settled for a long time in the Punjab previous to the composition of the Vedic hymns. A new art was, in the meantime, learnt up and extensively practised. Specially is this the case if we remember the slow growth of such arts among a primitive race. The Greeks learnt the art of navigation, and were adepts in it only at a later stage of Phœnician maritime activity. But here a race absolutely unused to the sea, or to any vast expanse of water, suddenly came near the five rivers which, at the time, were very wide and fast flowing. They learnt gradually the art of managing the rivers. The land was fertile and sufficient for their sustenance. The non-Aryans were powerful, and the constant war with them was engaging the best attention of the new adventurers from the north. Yet we find them sailing down the Indus and going out into the sea. The reason for this must be sought either in the economic pressure due to the growth of population in a fertile soil and a tropical climate, or to the essential spirit of adventure that characterizes a race marching out and conquering all the four regions in Asia and Europe.

The second fact that we are led to assume is that the Aryans learnt the art of navigation, at least at the cruder stages, from the non-Aryans. The original inhabitants possessed a culture which presupposes their knowledge of crossing the rivers. The Aryans must have been taught all about it by the slaves and the conquered. They had to take it up and improve it, if they wanted to live in a land divided by so many rivers. If the Aryan settlements were to be kept as a homogeneous unit, and if solidarity was

essential for effective conflict against the non-Aryans, they were bound to develop this art as a necessity for race-preservation and race-development. This impetus to navigation led, in time, to that further adventure into the sea, which they must have reached very early by moving, as all primitive races do, along the rivers, easily getting food and water as they marched on.

Thus we see that the Aryan advent into India must have been for a long time before the Rig Veda, and that the art of navigation was developed as a necessity, and most probably the nautical elements were learnt from the barbarians themselves whom the Aryans had been dislodging.

Means thereof.

The state of navigation that opens before us from a study of the Rig Veda is much better than what we should expect from a people just used to it and just learning it up from others and adopting it. *Nava* or boat is referred to in the Rig Veda, and the deity, Agni, is asked to convey the devotees in a *nava* across the sea.¹ The same deity is again asked to send off the adversaries, as if in a *nava*, to the opposite shore,² so that they may not any more trouble the praisers of Agni. The more frequent words, however, for boat or ship was *nau*. The devotees meditate on the deity, as a *nau* bears across (the river).³ The Aswins are asked to bear the praisers across (the sea of life) like two *naus*.⁴ Again, for the safe bearing of the *nau*, the divine Varuna is propitiated.⁵ The Viswadevas are asked to conduct the worshippers through many difficulties, as in *naus*, across the waters.⁶ The *nau* was built of wood, most probably dug out of a tree. It is described as *daru* or wood only,⁷ so that it may have been nothing but a piece of wood crudely fitted for the sea. The passage, however, is obscure, Sayana explaining it as the wooden body of the deity called Purushottama.

¹ i, 97, 8.

² ii, 39, 4.

³ i, 97, 7.

⁴ viii, 42, 3.

⁷ x, 153, 3.

⁵ i, 131, 2.

⁶ viii, 83, 3.

Navigation and Samudra.

The question has often been discussed as to whether the Aryans merely went to the sea for sporadic excursions or whether regular trade by sea existed. The subject properly comes under trade, which we shall study later on. But it is necessary to refer to this for the purpose of understanding the extent of their development in this line. Ships must have been much bigger when used for the sea than when they were built for river service only. The story of Bhujyu, son of Tugra, tells of the *sataritra*, the vessel with one hundred oars, by which the Aswins saved him.¹ The fact may have been exaggerated, but the existence of big sea-going vessels is proved by the story. The idea of such a ship could have been conceived only by the existence of seaworthy vessels. The most decisive proof of ocean voyage is to be found in i, 182, verses 55-7. The Aswins are said to have constructed a pleasant, substantial, winged bark, *plava*, borne on the ocean waters, *samudra*, for the son of Tugra by which, with mind devoted to the gods, they bore him up and, quickly descending, they made a path for him across the great waters. Four ships, *chatasro navah*, launched into the midst of the receptacle of the waters, *arnasi samudre*, sent by the Aswins, brought safe to shore the son of Tugra who had been cast headlong into the waters and plunged into inextricable darkness. Professor Roth has rendered *samudra* by *antariksha* or mid-heaven, and, with characteristic obstinacy, tried to explain away the whole affair about Bhujyu and his misfortunes at sea. But certain difficulties arise if we follow Roth. They are:—

- (i) How could Bhujyu fall into difficulties in the sky?
- (ii) How could he get there in the sky? By means of an aeroplane? If so, what proofs are there of this more wonderful feat?
- (iii) Bhujyu went to fight with the enemies who were in a *dvīpa*. The barbarians also must have been conversant with aeroplanes by which they defeated Bhujyu. Professor Roth has not raised the question of aeroplanes, but there are

¹ i, 116, 3.

enthusiasts who attempt to explain every indefinite passage in the Vedas by reading into them the latest achievements of science.

(iv) *Sindhu*, *kshodas*, and *arnas* can never be translated by *antariksha*, not even Roth attempts that. All these are synonyms of *samudra* and all these imply water. How can this anomaly be explained away?

(v) The expression, *arnasi samudre*, used in relating the story of Bhujyu,¹ is unequivocally the ocean; one is almost tempted to call it a tautology by means of which the author has tried to be explicit.

(vi) The word *nava* in the same passage makes it impossible to understand the sense of it except as a disastrous voyage against an enemy island, *dvipa*, in the course of which Bhujyu was either defeated in a naval battle or met with shipwreck.

Zimmer again attempts to explain *samudra* by identifying it with the mouth of the Indus where it is pretty wide. This is something more rational. But yet this would not explain all the contexts where *samudra* occurs. All sacrificial viands were supposed to concentrate in Agni, as the seven great rivers flow into the *samudra*.² The contrast between the *samudra* and the rivers is undeniable. How could the one be identified with the other? This passage is not an exceptional one nor does it stand alone. As the rivers are solicitous of mixing with the ocean, so are the priests bearing efficient libation to Indra.³ The soma juice enters the vast and profound Indra as rivers flow into the *samudra*.⁴ Varuna has performed the wonderful act whereby the lucid water-shedding rivers do not fill the *samudra* with water.⁵ Powerful praises in the sacred song are said to centre in Indra as rivers flow into the *samudra*.⁶ Saraswati, the chief and the purest of rivers, is described as flowing from the mountains to the *samudra*, *yati giribhya asamudrat*.⁷ In Indra all praises, all kinds of sustenance concentrate, like the aggregation of waters in the *samudra*.⁸ May the loud

¹ i, 182, 6.

⁴ iii, 46, 4.

² i, 71, 7.

⁵ v, 85, 6.

³ iii, 36, 7.

⁶ vi, 36, 3.

⁷ vii, 95, 2.

⁸ viii, 16, 2.

praises proceed to Agni as rivers to the *samudra*.¹ After being filtered, the soma juice flows promptly to the pitchers, as rivers running downwards flow into the *samudra*.² Soma is asked to enter Indra's heart as the rivers enter the *samudra*.³ The material at our disposal is very abundant, considering the meagre references with which we usually meet in the Rig Veda.

This demolishes beyond any hope whatsoever Zimmer's interpretation of *samudra* by river. It may not, it seems, be surprising to find somebody advocating the rendering of *samudra* by land. Against this also there are passages which, with equal strength, contrast land with *samudra*.⁴ In researches into the history of a race a fact must be recognized as a fact, and the greatest and the most distinguishing marks of the development of a race, its agriculture and its adventures, must be fully appreciated before its true history can be told. Obsession of pre-conceived theories is as fatal to this as the more perverse attempt to belittle its past. The assertion of aeroplanes is as unfounded from the available evidence as the denial of sea-voyage.

The argument against sea-voyage is merely negative. The critics say that in that case there ought to have been mention of masts, etc., the necessary equipments. But we should not expect much, in the Rig Veda, of what were not the main occupations of life. Still there is a passage which refers to the sails, where the *plava* or ship is called winged.⁵ Ordinarily, however, the boat was propelled by the oar or *aritra*. We have already referred to the word *sataritra*, or the vessel with one hundred oars. The Viswadevas are requested to construct the ship which is propelled by oars, *aritrāparṇa*.⁶ So also *aritrī* means the rower of a boat or the helmsman. The bird is said to give due directions to its voyage, as a helmsman guides a boat.⁷ Soma is said to propel the voice that indicates the path of truth as the boatman propels his boat.⁸ A less complete means

¹ viii, 44, 25.² ix, 88, 6.³ ix, 108, 16.⁴ i, 163, 1; iv, 21, 3; v, 55, 5; viii, 6, 39.⁵ i, 182, 5.⁶ x, 101, 2.⁷ ii, 42, 1.⁸ ix, 95, 2.

of crossing a stream was *dyumna*, raft.¹ It was much cruder than the *nau* or *nava*. Navigable rivers were distinguished from shallow ones. They were called *navya*,² evidently a variation of *nava*, that is, such as must be crossed by a boat.

Hunting.

The art of navigation developed out of necessity for the preservation and co-ordination of the race, and it was then utilized for purposes of trade and commerce. Hunting, on the other hand, was prevalent before the race was settled in any permanent habitat, when it had to depend on game for its livelihood. So, we should expect this to be well developed. With the conflict with the non-Aryans, the weapons also must have improved, and these again must have been, as far as possible, utilized for purposes of hunting. In the Vedic age hunting was one of the many arts of a previously pastoral life, which were nonetheless practised as supplementary to the main occupation, viz., agriculture. It is not possible to speak definitely about the extent to which hunting was resorted. But we find many references in the Rig Veda, from which we can ascertain that the practice of hunting existed, and the hunter was practically a professional man. In the hymn on the bird, the wish is expressed that no archer, armed with arrows, may reach it.³ The wild ox was also considered a game.⁴ But the arrow was not the usual weapon employed for this purpose. For the more harmless animals, birds, antelopes, etc., nets were used, and these occupied the major portion of hunting. So the hunter was called *pasin* or *nidhapati*, because his occupation was to handle the *pasa* or *nidha*, the net. We have already referred to *mukshiya* as the net.⁵ But *pasa* and *nidha* occur more frequently. Thus to Indra it is said: let no person detain thee, as fowlers throwing snares, *pasin*, catch a bird.⁶ The *nidhapati* is said to seize with a snare.⁷ Indra is asked to release his praisers who are like men bound in the net.⁸ The

¹ viii, 19, 14.

² ii, 42, 2.

³ iii, 45, 1.

⁴ i, 33, 11; i, 80, 8; i, 121, 13.

⁵ x, 51, 6.

⁶ ix, 83, 4.

⁷ i, 125, 2.

⁸ x, 73, 11.

boar-hunt was one of the pastimes in the period of the Rig Veda. It was a famous function in the annual ceremony (*aheria*) of the martial Rajput, and the wild excitement attending it has been the theme of many a national bard.¹ In the Rig Veda also it is mentioned when hunters were accompanied by the dogs who used to discover the boar from its hiding-place, but here it is not mentioned whether the hunt was with arrow or with lance as in Rajputana. Indrani in her contempt for Vrishakapi says: may the dog which chases the boar seize him by the ear and devour him.² But in the pursuit of the more fierce animals, the less dangerous method of catching them by means of pitfalls was used. Thus was a lion confined.³

Archery.

But by far the most important weapon for defence as well as for offence against non-Aryans and the wild animals was the bow and arrow. Warfare in those days was universally carried on by means of this, and the instruments were developed almost to perfection.⁴ The sky is once compared to the bow, *dhanus*.⁵ Indra's well-made and auspicious bow is said to be far-darting, and his golden arrow unfailing.⁶ The worshippers stretched the bow of manhood for the beloved and courageous Soma.⁷ A Kshatriya used to die with his bow in hand, and it was removed only before the funeral ceremony.⁸ This, it may be remembered, was the prevalent sentiment throughout India during her days of military glory. For a soldier to die in harness in the field is still the highest ambition. For the Mahomedan, too, it was the most direct road to Behesta to die fighting for the cause of his religion. The sentiment is one of the earliest in the human breast, and it tends to continue to be so. Thus *Vach*, or speech personified, seeks to bend the bow of Rudra to slay the destructive enemy of the Brahmanas.⁹ The bow was indeed the most effective weapon known to the ancient Aryans. It was the chief

¹ Todd: *Rajasthan*.

² x, 86, 4.

³ x, 28, 10.

⁴ Implements of war are reserved for treatment in a later volume.

⁵ viii, 72, 4.

⁶ viii, 77, 11.

⁷ ix, 99, 1.

⁸ x, 18, 9.

⁹ x, 125, 6.

instrument in battle. A whole verse¹ is devoted to bow in the hymn on weapons, persons, and implements, where the prayer is thus : May we conquer the cattle of our enemies with the bow ; with the bow may we be victorious in battle ; may we overcome our fierce exulting enemies with the bow ; may the bow disappoint the hope of the foe ; may we subdue with the bow all hostile countries. In another verse² : may the two extremities of the bow, acting in good harmony, like a wife sympathizing with her husband, uphold the *bibhritam* (either the warrior or the arrow), as a mother nurses her child upon her lap ; and may they, moving concurrently, and harassing the foe, scatter the enemies. Another word which is frequently used for bow is *dhanvan*.³ The bow was handled with such skill that Brahmanaspati is said to attain, with the truth-strung quick-darting bow, whatever he aims at.⁴ The bow was no doubt constructed out of some pliant yet strong wood. The bow-string was made of straps of leather. In colour the *godha* was tawny.⁵ It was more popularly called *jya*.⁶ It was drawn tight upon the bow and, while in action, repeatedly approached the ear of the archer.⁷ In this passage the *jya* is said to be a strap made of cowhide. It was usually allowed to lie loosely bound to the ends of the bow and was tightened when meant for action.⁸ The end of the bow itself with which the string was fastened had a special name, *artni*.⁹ The arrow itself was given so many names that one is apt to be puzzled at them. The exact significance of all these names is not quite clear. It may have been that the importance of the arrow secured for it so many appellations, or it may have been that each name stood for some special kind or for some special function. It is almost impossible now to discover what exactly was the peculiarity which was conveyed by these names. *Bana* stands for arrow in one place,¹⁰ where, obscurely enough, it is said to alight like shaven-headed boys. *Bunda* is another name used rarely.¹¹

¹ vi, 75, 2.² vi, 75, 4.³ ii, 33, 10 ; vi, 59, 7 ; vi, 75, 2 ; viii, 20, 12 ; ix, 69, 1.⁴ ii, 24, 8.⁵ viii, 69, 9.⁶ iv, 27, 3.⁷ vi, 75, 3.⁸ x, 166, 3.⁹ vi, 75, 4.¹⁰ vi, 75, 17.¹¹ viii, 45, 4.

Indra smote rain from the clouds with his far-stretched *bunda*.¹ So also unfailing was the golden *bunda* of Indra.² *Sara*, it seems, was a general term for a missile weapon, but its special use in the sense of arrow is not rare in the Rig Veda.³ *Saryā*, literally one made out of reed, was used for the arrow, as when the winds are said to blow the flames like the swift *saryas* of an archer.⁴ The expression, *yuvatim saryam*⁵ means perhaps the unfailing arrow. *Isu* stands for the same thing,⁶ but it is important for our purpose as it occurs in the hymn on weapons, persons, and implements,⁷ where its construction is described. The expressions *alakta* and *ayomukham* are used with *isu*. From this some authorities think that two kinds of arrows are meant, viz., one which is anointed with venom, that is, a poisoned arrow, and the other whose tip is made of *ayas*. But this division seems to be a little forced. The meaning may be put that the same arrow was poisoned and possessed an *ayas* blade. Thus *isu* here stands for a metallic arrow with poison anointed at the tip. *Sayaka* is sometimes used for an arrow,⁸ as when Indra Vaikuntha speaks in self-praise that by his *sayaka* he conquered the wealth consisting of kine, horses, herds, water, and gold.⁹ The arrow is sometimes called *karnayoni*,¹⁰ that is, having their abode in the ear, because while discharging the arrow it had to be pulled as far back as possible to give to it the greatest speed. Thus it would start from very near the ear. The bow-string also is thus said to approach the ear repeatedly.¹¹ Feather is mentioned in connection with the arrow. The real intention might have been, as in later days, to keep the balance of the arrow by making it steady, or it might have been merely ornamental. Considering the importance of the arrow in primitive times, and also considering the perfection of the art of archery, we may reasonably assume the introduction of feather for its utility rather than for mere ornamentation. The arrow is said to put on a feathery wing, *parṇa*.¹² The dead man is placed in the grave like the feathers of an

¹ viii, 77, 6.² viii, 77, 11.³ x, 87, 6; x, 125, 6.⁴ i, 148, 4.⁵ x, 178, 3.⁶ ii, 24, 8.⁷ vi, 75, 15.⁸ ii, 33, 10.⁹ x, 48, 4.¹⁰ ii, 24, 8.¹¹ vi, 75, 3.¹² vi, 75, 11.

arrow.¹ Therefore, the feather was not permanently attached to the arrow, but used to be laid aside and put on while using it. The quiver containing the arrows was fastened to some convenient part of the body, so that the shots might come in quick succession. *Nisangin* occurs in the Rig Veda, but its meaning is obscure except in one passage,² where the expression *sudhanvana isumanto*, that is, having good bows and arrows, and *nisangina*, are used together, so that the latter can only mean the quiver containing arrows. *Isudhi* or holder of *isu* is certainly a quiver.³ The commander of the whole host bound his *isudhi* on his person.⁴ The *isudhi*, the parent of many, of whom many are the sons, is mentioned elsewhere.⁵ The word *isukrit* is also interpreted by some as the quiver, but it should more properly be rendered as the person who makes the arrows. It occurs rarely in the Rig Veda.⁶ In discharging the arrow from the bow there was the danger of bruising the hand by the twang of the bow and the flight of the arrow. So it was protected by *hastaghna*, literally the protector of the hand.⁷

¹ x, 18, 14.² vi, 75, 5.³ v, 57, 2.⁴ i, 184, 3.⁵ x, 95, 3.⁶ i, 33, 3.⁷ vi, 75, 14.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNITS OF MEASUREMENT AND EXCHANGE.

Weights and Measures.

From the Rig Veda we do not find any clue to a measure of weight. Most probably there was no such measure, as things were measured either by number or by volume. It is doubtful whether any measure of weight was ever known to the Aryans during the whole of the Vedic age. The conception of weight as a standard of comparison is always a matter of late growth in the history of a nation. Among the Greeks and the Romans we do not find any trace of it in the earliest stages of their development. Owing to insufficiency of evidence we cannot ascertain even the approximate date from which they began to use weights as such. But in their case these systems were not developed by themselves; they were borrowed from the Egyptians. Among the latter, these existed only at a very late stage of their growth, and considerable doubt has been cast on their popularity in the ordinary transactions of daily life. The history of the Teutons is much better known. In their case weights as measures were unknown at the time of the conquest of England. Even during the period just following the Norman conquest, we do not hear anything about weights, although otherwise, particularly in political and administrative matters, they were well developed.

Measures of distance, on the other hand, grow at a very early stage. Distance is the most familiar conception in the life of a people, especially during the periods of migration. One day's march or a few days' march would readily become a sort of measure. When settled in a locality, this conception helps equally. The distance from village to village, from one end of the field to the other, all begin with certain

indefiniteness, but all tend ultimately to crystallize into definite measures of distance, suiting, for all practical purposes, the habits of thought of a primitive people. The Aryans in the Vedic age also had such conceptions of distance as measures. *Gavyuti* is frequently found in the Rig Veda. Its meaning has been the subject of much discussion leading to very wide differences of opinion. But in one passage it clearly indicates a distance, although what exactly it is cannot be ascertained. Agni is asked to drive away further than a *gavyuti* from the devotee poverty, hunger, and the strong demons.¹ Most probably it signified an indefinite and very long distance, since one would like to be as far away from those evils as possible. In the Brahmana period also the word was recognized as a measure of distance. *Yojana* was definitely a measure of distance. It means the distance which can be covered by one ride, that is, what can be traversed at one stretch without unyoking the horses. Thus the Dawn is said to precede Varuna (here identified with the Sun) by thirty *yojanas*.² With fast horses Indra can traverse many *yojanas* at one stretch.³ The Maruts are described as swift-moving like rivers and as having traversed many *yojanas* like mares who have journeyed from far.⁴

For purposes of trade and exchange it is essential that some standard should be devised by which comparisons can be made. If measure by weight was not there at so early a date, the people had to substitute for it a measure by volume. This was essential for even the elements of economic and social life. The Soma sacrifice was the great occasion in those days when the communal life was represented, and it is in this connection that we hear of the measure by volume. *Khari* was a jar which measured the quantity of the soma juice. Indra is asked to give a hundred *kharis* of soma juice.⁵

To other measures used in ordinary life we have already referred while studying agriculture. *Urdara* ⁶ was either such a measure or it was a granary. In either case, it

¹ viii, 60, 20.² x, 78, 7.³ i, 123, 8.⁴ iv, 32, 17.⁵ ii, 16, 3.⁶ ii, 14, 11.

could broadly compare one heap of grains with another. *Sthivi* also occurs in the Rig Veda¹ with the same meaning. It occurs also in its adjectival form, *sthivimant*.² That they helped measurement is certain, but it is equally certain that measurement by volume, like measurement by distance, was crude. This only shows an imperfect growth of the elements of retail trading.

Currency.

In the period of the Rig Veda, barter was the form of exchange, so that there had not as yet arisen any need for a medium of exchange. In one passage³ suspicion is raised about it, where Rishi Kakshiyat speaks of having received a hundred *nishkas*, *nishka* being a golden necklace. So many could not be used for personal adornment. It must have served the purpose of getting other necessities of life. Still we cannot say that it was the usual currency, because its mention is so rare, and because its value could not be consistent with its use as a medium of exchange. Here also we cannot be positive, as we do not know the value of gold in comparison with that of other things. The safe course would be to allow *nishka* as having been the medium of exchange, but to restrict its use to rare occasions or a limited circle owing to the very rare occurrence of the word as such medium and to its probably high value.

¹ x, 68, 3.

² x, 27, 5.

³ i, 126, 2.

CHAPTER IX.

TRADE AND COMMERCE.

Barter.

TRADE of course existed in the period of the Rig Veda, but the villages being self-sufficient units, and the wants of the people being limited, it was naturally confined within narrow limits. *Kraya* is the word for exchange in the later Samhitas, derived from the root *kri*, to buy. In the Rig Veda we find the use of this root only.¹ Ordinarily sale and purchase constituted exchange of things only. Barter was the normal system and no popular medium of exchange as such existed. Indra is offered libations in exchange for ten milch kine.² From this, some have concluded that cattle formed the medium of exchange. But the use of the word does not seem to justify such an assumption.

Higgling of the Market.

Human nature being what it is, the attempt on the part of the parties to depress the exchange value of the commodities of others must have been the same. The higgling and bargaining of the market were known in those early days. Even as it is to-day, an exchange transaction was complete and irrevocable as soon as it was arranged and delivery of things made over. This is clearly indicated in a hymn to Indra by Rishi Vamadeva.³ A man realized a small value for an article of great value, *bhuyasa vasnam acharat kaniyas*, that is, by (giving up) much a man acquired in exchange a little wealth or value. Coming again to the buyer he says : This has not been sold, I want the full price. But he does not recover the small price by a large equivalent ; whether

¹ iv, 24, 10.

² iv, 24, 10.

³ iv, 24, 9.

helpless or clever they adhere to their bargain. *Vasna* in this passage clearly means price. But *sulka* is the usual word for price. Thus Indra's image is so dear that it would not be sold, even for a large *sulka*.¹ The idea of price also underlies another verse where the sacrificer and his wife, by their praises, confer strength on Indra and Varuna to receive, for this price, great wealth from the gods.²

Merchant.

The merchant went by the name of *vanij*, and his position was distinctly inferior to that of the other important classes in society. Dirghasravas is called *vanij*, and as such he has been distinguished from the other descendants of the same line as his, who were all rishis, simply because, according to the legend, he was compelled to trade during a period of famine.³ The merchant is referred to as going to the wood and obtaining water, *vanijvankur apa purisham*.⁴ The avarice and greed of a merchant is mentioned, and Indra is asked not to deal with the praisers like a merchant.⁵ The word *pani*, as it occurs in the Rig Veda, is so variously interpreted as merchants, *dasas*, demons, members of a special tribe, etc., that we deem it prudent not to rely upon it for our purpose here. Another word, *bekanata*, is identified by some with usurer, especially as it is mentioned with *pani*.⁶ But its meaning is as uncertain as that of *pani* itself. One authority has even identified it with Kashmir and explains the passage as referring to its conquest by Indra.

Maritime Commerce.

We have already discussed *in extenso* the art of navigation as developed among the Aryans of the period of the Rig Veda. These voyages into the sea were mostly sporadic expeditions either for fighting or for mere adventure. There is nothing to prove that there was any commerce carried on with any country outside India. The Babylonian trade must have been of a much earlier date before the advent of

¹ viii, 1, 5.

⁴ v, 45, 6.

² vii, 82, 6.

⁵ i, 33, 3.

³ i, 112, 11.

⁶ viii, 16, 10.

the Aryans into India. At the same time we cannot deny the existence of some coastal trade as well as that of voyages for the treasures of the ocean.¹ The Aswins are said to bring riches to King Sudas and they are requested to bring wealth to their praisers from the *samudra*.² Indra is asked to pour riches upon the worshippers from the *samudra*.³ Not only are the treasurers of the sea referred to, as in the above passages, but positive evidence is not wanting for the proof of actual going out to sea for gaining these treasures. Ushas is described as the excitress of chariots which are harnessed at her coming, like those who, being desirous of wealth, send ships to the sea, *smudre na sravasyavah*, literally, like those, desirous of wealth, going for the sea.⁴ The adorers of Indra, bearing oblations, throng round him as merchants, covetous of gain, *sanisyavah*, crowd the ocean on a voyage.⁵ The worshippers praise the deities for desirable things as those, desiring to acquire riches, praise the ocean on traversing it,⁶ *samudram na sancharane sanisyavah*, explained thus: those wishing to possess riches for the sake of going through the midst of the ocean praise it. From the above references it seems to be undeniable that maritime trade did exist, but its extent seems to be limited. The want of reference to masts, etc., necessary for going out far into the sea or cross over to Africa or Babylonia, suggests that no such communication was kept up by the Aryans. Along the coast, by the sea, there certainly was commerce, and this commerce was extremely lucrative, so that a merchant desirous of wealth could be fully satisfied by the profits of trade in those regions. Unfortunately no reference specifically alludes to the commodities obtained by this trade.

Pearls were, of course, obtained thus, since we find the use of *mani* or jewels (*see ante*, Ornaments). With regard to other things brought and with regard to the commodities exported, we are in the dark.

¹ vii, 6, 7.⁴ i, 48, 3.² i, 47, 6.⁵ i, 56, 2.³ ix, 97, 44.⁶ iv, 55, 6.

CHAPTER X.

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS.

CONCEPTS are always generalized terms and often abstractions. We should not, therefore, expect many of them in the earliest literature of any race. The Greeks and the Romans had currency reforms but not much of economic abstractions during the early periods of their history. Later Greeks were famous for philosophic concepts, and we find some economic ones in Aristotle's Politics. The Teutons had none at all while on the Continent, or, if they had, Cæsar and Tacitus failed to notice them. But with the growth of wide economic activity concepts naturally grow. These, when found, are the surest and the truest guide to the economic achievement of a nation, since these invariably follow and never precede economic evolution.

Wealth.

Let us now look at the wealth of the ancient Aryans and study their conception of it. The general term for wealth is *rayi*.¹ The usual prayer to the gods is for wealth. *Rayi* must have included all valuable things, the possession of which would advance the material interests of early man.² Ribhus are asked to give *rayi* which they possess. This is said to comprise cattle, food, progeny, dwellings, and abundant sustenance.³ Men glorify Indra, the lord of riches, for the sake of obtaining sons, valiant grandsons, and rain.⁴ Indra is propitiated so that the devotees may obtain that wealth which comprises cattle, horses, and food,⁵ these being the most important and most valuable possessions. There are also special uses of the word *rayi*

¹ i, 73, 1; ii, 21, 6; iii, 1, 19; iv, 36, 9.
² v, 4, 11. ³ iv, 34, 10. ⁴ vi, 31, 1. ⁵ viii, 6, 9.

standing for valuable things. This is helpful in understanding the things which were considered to be exceptionally valuable and therefore might be identified with *rayi* itself. *Vira* or hero is one of them, *vira* of course standing for a son who is valiant, otherwise the prayer in general terms for a hero would be meaningless. Indra is asked to give the coveted wealth, the source of great power and of numerous progeny.¹ The Maruts are propitiated so that the praisers may thereby daily enjoy great affluence consisting of valiant progeny.² The Dawn is prayed to for wealth, comprehending progeny.³ Horses were included in wealth, and as these formed one of the most important assets in war and in religious ceremonies, they are frequently spoken of specially as wealth or *rayi*. The Maruts are asked to bring wealth comprising horses.⁴ Cattle and food have been very frequently mentioned as *rayi*. Thus the wealth of the early Aryans consisted of progeny, without which the domestic worship and the integrity of the family would be endangered. It consisted of horses, without which it would be impossible to carry on war and all aggressions and defence against the non-Aryans. Cattle were also recognized as wealth, for without them the main industry, agriculture, would be difficult, and sustenance of life would be hopelessly reduced. Finally, food was included, by which of course they understood agricultural products mainly, because without this the very foundation of the social structure, the settlement on Indian soil, would be destroyed. Thus it is true indeed that the conception of wealth is the index of the state of a society. The Aryans had gold, jewels, and ornaments, but these are not specifically mentioned as wealth. This fact would, apart from all other proofs, go to show that the system of exchange was not prevalent to any large extent, so that the conversion of stock was not contemplated in the computation of one's wealth, and the aggregate stock of the most useful things was recognized as such. This is so, not because gold was, volume for volume, less valued than cattle or horse or food, but because gold

¹ ii, 11, 13.² iv, 51, 10.³ ii, 30, 11.⁴ v, 41, 5.

could not, in times of stress, satisfy those immediate needs of food and protection which, in a primitive race, naturally loomed large owing to the lack of what may be called the "telescopic faculty" of the mind in looking to and making provisions for the future.

Private Property.

In India, besides cattle, progeny, horse, and food, there was another element which must be recognized as important. This is the right on land. The idea of private property is the last thing that a people develop, because it is directly the outcome of a series of abstract ideas. First, there must be the idea of possession. It must be based on the conception of some abstract right based on prescription, which would condemn any intruder who comes in by the same right to occupy and appropriate like the original man. This possession would thus develop into and confirm ownership. This is too much for a community which is emerging out of a nomadic state and which, in the beginning, finds ample land for appropriation without occasion for any dispute. In Greece and Rome this conception of the ownership of land developed very early. But that was due to the peculiar beliefs of their religion which dominated their whole being. Ancestors had to be worshipped separately because they would not accept libations at the hands of one who was not of their blood. His presence would disturb their rest. Thus family worships were separated from one another. The tombs also had, for the same reasons, separated at an early stage. This spirit of exclusion naturally led to the belief that the family tomb must be well defined and be possessed by the family only. Thus one was excluded from the others. So that in Greece and Rome all the intervening stages of abstract theory of rights and possessions were stepped over by the peculiar religious beliefs. This is further confirmed by the fact that, whereas the regular independent growth of ownership, being based on the individual's rights to property, makes it disposable at his will, the ancient Græco-Roman property belonging to the

family gods on whose behalf the family or its representative, the *pater*, was merely the trustee, was inalienable and indivisible; *paters* came and went, but the corporation, the family, including the dead ancestors, the living members, and those who would be born or adopted into it, remained intact. Destruction of the family only would lead to the alienation of its land.

Among the Teutons this religious belief did not prevail. They, in their settlements on land, held it as belonging equally to all the social units which were families. They did not and could not consider a displacement from a settlement as sacrilegious. The only resentment was what arose out of defeat. In all Teutonic settlements the communal *mark* was the basis of the organization of the village community. The land was theoretically shared by all as to the tripartite division into cultivable land, meadow land, and the waste; but no family could point to any particular plot of land which belonged to it. It had only a share, the strips being distributed anew every year. In such circumstances the right of ownership, in the case of the Teutons, of the family, could not develop so long as the pressure of population and the improvements in agriculture did not bring in intensive culture of the soil. With intensive culture it would be discovered that an annual redistribution of the strips would lead to the abandonment, by the cultivating family, of whatever improvements it might have made in the land. Therefore, self-interest would generate solicitude for the same piece of land. Thus family ownership of land was established in Britain. But they had not as yet reached the further stage of individual ownership. This was not an indigenous growth but a foreign engrafting. The Normans brought the feudal idea of individual ownership which William made subordinate to the ultimate authority of the king. The work was not difficult of achievement, since Roman and Continental ideas had already been remoulding English society and English institutions through the preaching of the Christian Church.

In India conditions were different. The elements of religious beliefs with which the Aryans separated from the

effects which are said to be the curse of India south of the Punjab. The first settlement was effected by extirpating or displacing the non-Aryans. The fertile land fell to the Aryans. Cultivation yielded fruits beyond all their previous experience. The spirit of adventure that is the backbone of a conquering race, combined with abundance of food and a bracing climate, would give the greatest impetus to the multiplication of the race. None of the Malthusian checks, either positive or preventive, except war, could have prevailed at that time, at any rate, not intensively. The fertile soil gave produce in abundance, so much so that its limits could never have been reached, at an early stage, by the increase of population. All these causes would combine to accelerate the growth of population. The fecundity of a race grows and becomes part of it just as any other social or moral characteristic. Thus the Aryans began to grow in number. At the same time they were limited, as to further territorial expansion, on all sides by the mountains, the sea, or the non-Aryans who were an active race. The capacity to multiply grew, whereas the extent of the territory could not be so increased. So, in time there was felt the pressure of population; and people had to take recourse to less fertile lands and to intensive culture of the soil. With time this pressure increased continuously, leading to adventures by sea and further expansion toward the south. It will be interesting to remember that exactly the same conditions led to the Teutonic difficulties in Frisia, and, being hemmed in by the Roman armies on the south and the west, the Teutons had to force their way into the sea and settle in Norway, England, and Iceland. In India the Aryan culture of the time of the Rig Veda was much superior to that of the Teutons in Frisia. Their arts and crafts, their methods of agriculture and warfare, their construction of the chariot, the bow and arrow, and the houses, all point to this. Simultaneously they point to something else. Agriculture or house building could not have developed so much during the nomadic state, nor could the arts of navigation be developed without a sea. The assumption is irresistible that the Aryans had lived in India for a considerable period before the composition

of the Vedic hymns. If so, that confirms our theory of private property. Originally there was no economic pressure of population nor the need of intensive culture. But with time this grew and with intensive culture the ownership of land was gradually evolved. The rapidity of development along this line would exactly correspond to the severity of the pressure of population within, and that of the non-Aryans without, the Aryan settlement. It was only intensified by the development in agriculture failing to keep pace with the tremendous increase of population. To economize the energy of the race and to give it stimulus, the land had to be made the subject of private property, so that the certainty of effects would lead to the greatest improvements of agriculture that were possible with the known methods. Of course, these arguments did not appear to the people of the time. They were impelled by economic needs, and adapted themselves to the changing environment. In doing so they gradually slipped from the state of communal ownership, if ownership at all was there, to the state of family ownership, or, more properly, as we have already seen under Village Community, to that of individual ownership, the head of the family being the real owner.

This process of disintegration with respect to the ownership of land must have had its reflex on other social ideas. Thus we do not find the son a slave of the father, as in Greece and Rome, where he could be sold, and where, in the beginning, he could hold no separate property. In the Rig Veda we cannot discover a single passage which would relegate the son to such a disreputable position. Yet the Græco-Roman idea of the necessity of the son for the continuance of the family was maintained. The son's position thus was much better here than in the West. In all this we find traces of the working of the idea of ownership dissolving into many and attaching to the individual.

In such a state of society the land, the property, would be recognized as a part of the wealth of the individual or the family. We have abundant evidence of this in the Rig Veda. *Reknaś* meant inherited property or property in general ;

and it occurs many times in the Rig Veda.¹ Thus our study of the economic and political life of the Vedic Aryans reveals a condition of society which is equally established by a study of their conceptions about wealth and ownership, the only two important and definite conceptions of economic bearing which have come down to us through the Rig Veda.

¹ i, 31, 14 ; i, 121, 5 ; i, 158, 1 ; i, 162, 2 ; vi, 20, 7 ; vii, 4, 7 ; vii, 40, 2.

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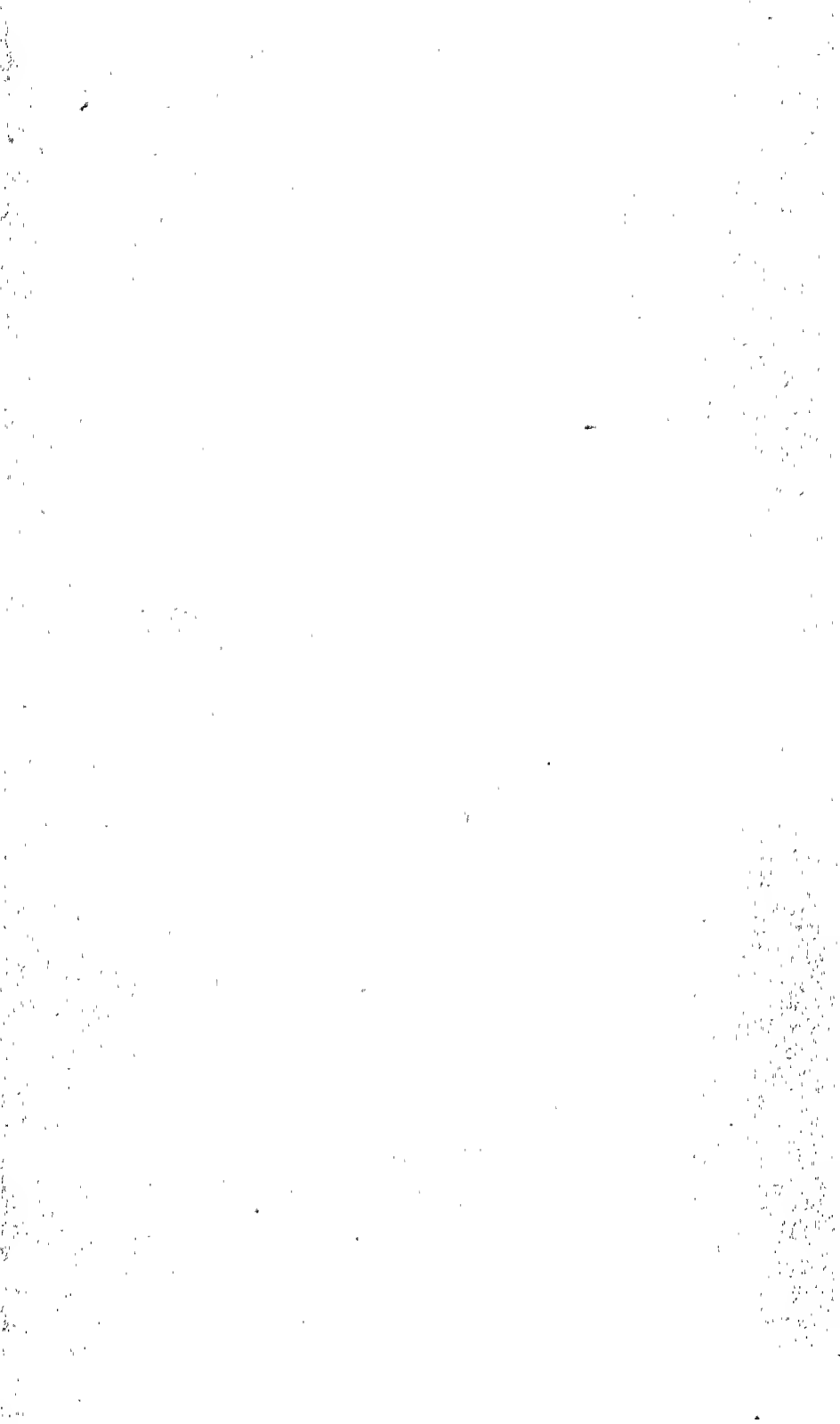
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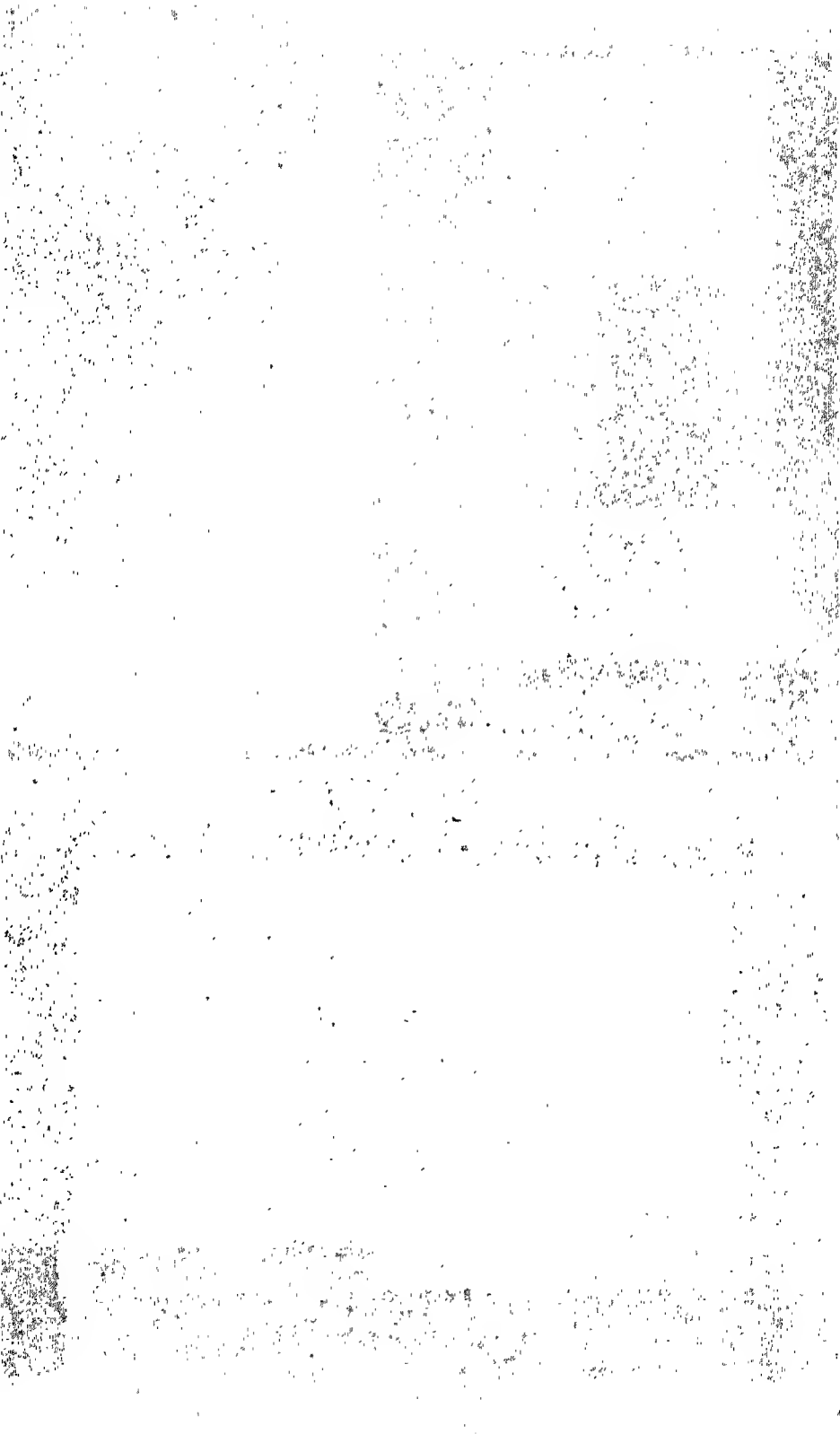
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